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AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION LAW STUDENT DIVISION DECLARES MARCH 27 AS NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH DAY FOR LAW STUDENTS

CHICAGO, March 26, 2008—The American Bar Association Law Student Division has declared March 27th to be National Mental Health Day as part of the division's recently established mental health initiative. The day was created to increase awareness of mental health concerns that many law students suffer from. To kick-off the inaugural observance of the day, the Law Student Division has developed a comprehensive [toolkit](#) that will aid law students, student bar associations and law school administrators in learning about some of the prevalent mental health problems law students experience.

Daniel Suvor, chair of the division and a third-year law student, emphasized the importance of the initiative. "The stigma of mental illness and the laws in many states that grant conditional bar admittance to those who battle with these conditions have historically prevented many from seeking treatment," he said. "It is our goal to combat these barriers by providing this educational resource, the [Toolkit for Student Bar Associations and Administrators](#)."

Between 20 to 40 percent of law students suffer from clinical depression at one time or another. Additionally, practicing lawyers experience mental health issues at a rate that is 8 to 15 times higher than that of the general population, and of 104 occupational groups, lawyers ranked highest in numbers of professionals managing depression. These statistics further support the need for equipping students with tips on how to cope with stress, depression and other mental health issues.

The Toolkit for Student Bar Associations and Administrators includes a comprehensive section on signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety, information on stress reduction and other keys to minimizing the symptoms of some mental illnesses.

Many law schools have already taken notable steps toward helping students cope with mental health concerns, including Stetson University College of Law, University of Virginia School of Law, South Texas College of Law, Southwestern Law School, University of San Diego School of Law and The George Washington University Law School. Some of the unique resources these schools have developed include providing students with three free hours of professional counseling, a peer advisor program, mental health clinics and stress management workshops.

Division leaders emphasize that National Mental Health Day is just one day out of the year, but the mental health issues of law students are a year-round concern. To learn more about mental health among law students and how to implement mental health programs, download the toolkit [here](#).

With more than 51,700 members, the ABA Law Student Division is the largest professional student organization in the United States. The division provides law students with opportunities for legal education, professional skills development and career counsel. Each year the division sponsors four competitions: the Arbitration Competition, the Client Counseling Competition, the National Appellate Advocacy Competition and the Negotiation Competition.

With more than 413,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers

and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.

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