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NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS WALKS FOR THE MIND OF AMERICA ON NOV. 5

WHITFIELD— Citizens of Mississippi will be changing minds one step at a time when they join together with thousands across the country on Saturday, November 5th, 2011 in NAMIWalks for the Mind of America.

The Mississippi Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will host this year's walk at Winner's Circle Park in Flowood, with registration beginning at 9:00 a.m. and the walk beginning an hour later. Dedicated participants will "friend and fund raise" together in the weeks leading up to the event. In 2011, there will be close to 70 NAMIWalks across America.

"Old and young, rich and poor, the common goal is to make America a better home for people with brain disorders through education on mental illnesses and improved system-wide treatment opportunities," said Kevin Jones, Walk Manager of the NAMI Mississippi affiliate.

The Mississippi chapter of NAMI is also hosting a candlelight vigil on Friday, November 4th on the south steps of the Capitol Building, located 400 High Street in Jackson, Miss. This vigil will honor those that are facing mental illness and bring awareness to the community statewide. It will begin at 7:00 p.m.

"There is dignity and empowerment in acting together with others who believe," said Elizabeth Caruthers, a walker who lives with schizophrenia. "We believe in protecting the lives, liberties, and pursuit of jobs, homes, and families – a full life, for people with mental illness.

"Like any physical illness, mental illness, while grossly misunderstood, is not a disorder to be ashamed of. The shame is to ignore it."

NAMIWalks in Flowood is sponsored in part by many national and local businesses. There will be activities for the whole family at the event, and everyone is invited to join. To participate in the walk as a walker or sponsor, contact Kevin Jones or Christy Bradshaw at (601) 899-9058 or at kjones@namims.org. Visit NAMIWalks on the web at www.nami.org/ms.

MSH, a facility of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, was founded in 1855 and facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services, by rehabilitating to the least restrictive environment, utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services, which reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.