



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Mental Health Association of Montgomery County Releases New PSA featuring Former County Executive Doug Duncan** *Hopes to raise awareness of mental health issues in tough economic times*

ROCKVILLE – Today, Mental Health Association of Montgomery County (MHA) released a PSA to promote their Million Minds Campaign, an effort to improve mental wellness and awareness for Montgomery County’s nearly one million residents. The spot features former County Executive and Million Minds Chairman Doug Duncan, who won national recognition for his willingness to talk about his personal battle with depression.

“Mental wellness touches us all in many ways, as I can personally attest to. But, thankfully, MHA is here,” said Duncan. “I hope that by not being afraid to find the help I needed I can encourage others to find the support they need.”

The Million Minds Campaign is designed to promote everyday mental wellness, sustain MHA’s high quality standards and services, and to fund outreach and education opportunities.

One example of the services MHA offers that is of particular relevance during these challenging fiscal times is its Hotline. Between October and December of 2008, coinciding with the economic downturn, MHA saw an increase of over 500 calls in the call volume to the Hotline as compared to the same quarter in 2007. Of all of the calls to the hotline, the number of suicide assessments is up 50% and has seen over a tenfold increase in callers identifying financial distress as a reason for seeking help. Another is its community education activities through which MHA offers materials on mental health related topics and local resources, including those that support mental wellbeing during difficult times.

“In 2010, Montgomery County will reach and surpass one million residents and MHA wants every single one of them to know we’re here if they need help, “ said MHA Executive Director Sharon Friedman. “Million Minds is an initiative to improve everyday mental wellness and that means giving people the tools to improve their wellness, as well as recognize when they need help.”

The ad release coincides with the release of a media insert, entitled *Flourish*.

To learn more about The Million Minds Campaign or MHA, please visit [www.MillionMindsMC.org](http://www.MillionMindsMC.org).

(continued)

Full Script :30

Today's world is a busy, stressful place and, in tough times, it can feel overwhelming.

I'm Doug Duncan. Mental health issues touch everyone. I should know, it has affected me and my family. But since 1957, the Mental Health Association of Montgomery County has provided valuable services to our community.

Montgomery County will soon have one million people and MHA is committed to better mental wellness for everyone.

So for help or to learn more visit [www.MillionMindsMC.org](http://www.MillionMindsMC.org).

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*Mental Health Association of Montgomery County (MHA) promotes mental wellness and supports those with mental illness by sponsoring and implementing education, advocacy and direct service programs. A private, nonprofit, United Way (#8151) agency, MHA has served Montgomery County for over 50 years. The organization currently manages 11 direct service programs for children, teens, families, senior adults as well as individuals with long-term mental illness. Approximately 1,000 volunteers implement programs under the direction of MHA's professional staff.*