

PRO BONO COUNSELING PROGRAM

An Invitation To Make A Difference

February 18, 2009

Dear Licensed Mental Health Professional,

We are living in challenging times. The current economic downturn combined with other personal struggles is causing many people in our community higher than normal amounts of stress, fear and anxiety about the future. In Harris County, recent data shows that about 31% of the population or nearly one million people lack health insurance. This is more than double the national average. As a result, many individuals and families with mental health needs delay or forgo treatment due to their inability to afford the cost of services.

To help Houstonians cope and manage these challenges we must come together as a community of care. As a licensed therapist, we urge you to join your colleagues who are already volunteering with the Mental Health America of Greater Houston, Pro Bono Counseling Program to make a difference in the wellness of individuals and families in our area. Because our need is great, we also encourage you to share this information with a colleague and invite them to participate, too.

The Pro Bono Counseling Program is a volunteer-based, non-profit community service that links professionals with people who need, but cannot afford, mental health care. To improve access to treatment, we ask that you consider accepting two or more, individual or family, pro bono referrals annually. The program staff understands that your volunteer time is valuable. Candidates who are ineligible for a pro bono referral in this program include those who present substance abuse, crisis needs, or serious mental illness. We thoroughly screen prospective clients for:

- ★ Financial eligibility (unemployed, uninsured and underinsured) and to rule out those who have means to receive public or private help.
- ★ The presenting problem in order to carefully match their needs with the most appropriate clinician.

Why Volunteer?

We know that most clinicians have offered *pro bono* work for years. However, your volunteer affiliation with Mental Health America of Greater Houston's Pro Bono Counseling Program has added benefits. We will offer:

- ★ Documentation and recognition of hours you devote to pro bono services.
- ★ Free training and CEU opportunities.
- ★ Upcoming Workshop: "**Resources for the Pro Bono Client**" on **Friday, March 26th, 9:00 am–11:30 am (2.5 CEU's)** at Mental Health America of Greater Houston - **no charge**.
- ★ Networking opportunities.
- ★ The opportunity to be part of a very unique and groundbreaking initiative.

To join the Mental Health America of Greater Houston, Pro Bono Counseling Program please click [here](#) to complete and submit a web-based form and Letter of Agreement. If you are unable to provide pro bono services at this time, but would like to be part of our Information & Referral Database, please click [here](#). If you have any questions, please call 713-522-5161 or email: irspecialist@mhahouston.org.

Sincerely,



Betsy Schwartz
President/CEO