



## ACNP Supports World Mental Health Day, October 10<sup>th</sup>

In recognition of World Mental Health Day, October 10<sup>th</sup>, the College hosted a breakfast briefing for the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus members and legislative staffers to illustrate how neuroscience research informs efforts in treating mental health problems such as suicide, a preventable public health problem and a leading cause of death in the United States. Because mental health disorders cross party lines, ACNP believes it is a valuable time for policymakers to address mental health issues. The goals of the briefing were to promote public understanding and knowledge about neuroscience research, exhibit the importance of continued research and expand the continuing dialogue about greater investment in suicide prevention research which is needed to stop the untimely death of thousands of Americans each year, foster a discussion about breaking down the stigmas often associated with mental illness as well as highlight the economic impact of the US economy due to depression and suicide. Dr. Charles Nemeroff, Chair, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, chaired the briefing and provided an update on the magnitude of the problem and the neurobiology of depression and suicide. Dr. Robert Hirschfeld, Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College, provided information on the economic impact due to depression and suicide. Karen Taylor provided a moving personal perspective on how depression affected her life and journey on leading others to treatment and eliminating the negative stigma of depression.

Also on October 10<sup>th</sup>, the College hosted a luncheon briefing for the Senate HELP Committee, Special Committee on Aging members and legislative staffers to illustrate how neuroscience research informs efforts in treating common mental health problems amongst our aging population. The goals of the briefing were to promote public understanding and knowledge of the social, mental, and fiscal impacts of diabetes, obesity, and dementia, stimulate greater investment and innovation in dementia research as well as share the benefits of taking a public health approach to dementia and prevention. During the briefing, Dr. Natalie Rasgon of Stanford University provided public understanding and knowledge of the social, mental, and fiscal impacts of diabetes, obesity, and dementia. Dr. Sam Gandy, Associate Director of the Mount Sinai Medical Center Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, provided an overview on the latest basic science discoveries in the mechanisms of Alzheimer's disease and its impact on developing precision based interventions. Dan Gasby, caregiver of former model and lifestyle guru B. Smith, provided brief remarks and a personal account of how dementia has affected his life as the caregiver of his wife.

The Liaison Committee continuously finds opportunities to support the ACNP's fundamental premise that collaboration and effective communication among the National Institutes of Health, the pharmaceutical industry, advocacy/consumer-based organizations, other professional societies, and scientists in academic centers is essential for fulfilling the College's mission.