

The Satcher Health Leadership Institute



March 31, 2011

Dear Colleague,

As Surgeon General, I released a number of reports on important health issues like tobacco and health, mental health, suicide prevention, sexual health and youth violence prevention. Our report on mental health identified stigma – beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that lead to stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination – as a major obstacle preventing people with mental illness from getting help. Research shows that people with mental illness experience stigma at both the individual and structural levels.

The Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine has teamed up with the NFL and NFL Alumni Association and invites you to attend a town hall style forum entitled **NFL Community Huddle: Taking a Goal Line Stand for Your Mind & Body**. We will be hosting this event in Kansas City on **Wednesday, May 4, 2011 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.** at the **Westin Crown Center Hotel**. This event is **free and open to the public** and part of a series of forums we are hosting nationwide that aim to educate, motivate and mobilize communities to work together to address important issues that can affect our mental health.

Throughout the past several months, increased attention has been given to the issue of concussions sustained in sports participation at all levels. In light of the evidence of the connection between head injury and mental illness, the NFL has made strides in caring for the effects of injury that often do not emerge until decades after a player has retired from the league. This forum is important and timely and provides an opportunity for communities to create a “game plan” for reducing stigma while influencing supportive measures to addressing mental disorders.

Ultimately, our goal is to develop strategies for preventing and reducing the risk of dementia and stigma related to mental disorders. The Satcher Health Leadership Institute wishes to engage communities in an informed, sustained and inclusive dialogue on issues that impact mind and body health outcomes.

For more information on the upcoming forum please see the enclosed program. To register online, visit <http://shli.msm.edu/NFL>. Please share this information with your colleagues and other members of the community as appropriate. Thank you again for your consideration, and with your help we believe that we will be well on our way to making a difference reducing stigma surrounding mental health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Satcher".

David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D.
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