

# SDI

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INTERNATIONAL



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### Coverage for the Monthly TL Top

It has been shown consistently that implementing mental health parity in insurance coverage does not substantially increase costs. Some corporations, specifically Bank One, have taken the step toward providing parity in non-discriminatory coverage for their employees. A number of states, including Vermont and Maryland, have full mental health parity laws. And, in 1999, the federal government introduced parity to federal employees through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

The evidence has shown in these cases that health care costs have not risen astronomically. In fact, the opposite is true. These measures have resulted in healthier employees who miss fewer days due to undiagnosed mental illness.

The Post does not just correctly that stigma continues to prevent many Americans from seeking treatment. It is unfortunate that The Post chose to perpetuate this stigma by repeating the myths that parity will raise our insurance and health care systems.

CHL KAMER LIBERFARJ  
Chair,  
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## NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH *Awareness* CAMPAIGN

### National Mental Health Awareness Campaign

Sept. 11, 2001 is seared into the memory of every adult American. The terror experienced from the attacks left a collective psychological scar on the nation. The National Mental Health Awareness Campaign (NMHAC) was positioned to help lead the healing process.

#### Challenge

SDI was initially retained by the National Mental Health Association to develop a public service campaign for discussing mental health issues and the accompanying stigma with U.S. Armed Forces. 9/11 created a more significant and immediate mission for NMHAC. The challenge was to help Americans better understand mental health issues using the context of the trauma felt in ways large and small by all Americans.

#### Solution

SDI created and implemented national strategies with immediacy to reach multiple stakeholder audiences and the general public:

- Within 48 hours of SDI created a nationwide NMHAC advisory urging Americans to seek counseling via the NMHAC's toll-free number linking callers with mental health professionals in their area.
- One week after 9/11, we had established a partnership with the Ad Council and created and released a nationwide PSA featuring former First Lady Tipper Gore and Alma Powell, wife of General Colin Powell. By early October, a second PSA was released, and a series of interviews for NMHAC spokespersons were organized with national and regional media outlets.
- On the six-month anniversary of 9/11, SDI organized a partnership with the NMHAC and the U.S. Department of Defense to host a "Healing the American Spirit" National Town Hall in Washington, D.C. The town hall panel discussion was moderated by Tipper Gore and featured prominent panelists from the U.S. Army and the U.S. Surgeon General. SDI arranged for the town hall to be broadcast and streamed to all U.S. bases. SDI also promoted a news package across a variety of military media resulting in global news coverage.
- SDI replicated a similar event in New York City to address ways to continue healing and helping those who were most affected.

#### Results

While nothing could lessen or erase the tragedy, the NMHAC was able to accelerate the healing process for the country through national, regional and local public education. Subsequent surveys showed that Americans were beginning to understand mental health issues could be experienced by anyone and appreciate the need to focus on and support mental health healing.

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