Nurse News

NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK — FEBRUARY 24-MARCH 3

Spread the EDAP Message — "Listen to Your Body"

You can be part of a life-saving outreach effort by joining the National Eating Disorders Association in observing the 15th annual Eating Disorders Awareness Week (EDAW), from February 24 – March 3. During EDAW, health care providers, teachers, social workers, and eating disorder professionals will work to promote healthy body image and prevent eating disorders by distributing educational materials and organizing awareness events in their communities, schools and college campuses.

Each year, the extent and impact of this important outreach program continues to grow. In 2001, EDAW was facilitated by more than 600 coordinators in all 50 states and in six countries. EDAW events were planned in over 1,000 K-12 schools, colleges, hospitals, and communities, generating media coverage that reached millions. The events included: workshops, conferences, public forums, film nights on college campuses, radio shows, hospital outreach programs, presentations, panel discussions, and other innovative educational activities.

The key to eating disorders prevention is identifying and changing the conditions that promote the three Ds: body **d**issatisfaction, **d**ieting, and **d**rive for thinness. Cultural norms that glorify thinness, focus on the proportions of one's body, and present an unrealistic beauty ideal have helped to create a culture in which millions of individuals spend their lives obsessed with dieting rather than living. There are distressing facts associated with eating disorders:

- Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.
- It is estimated that 10–20% of bulimia cases will eventually prove fatal (National Eating Disorders Information Center, 2001).
- Between 5 and 10 million girls and women, and 1 million boys and men, are currently suffering from eating disorders and related conditions.

Over the years, EDAW coordinators have made great strides in educating the public about the dangers of excessive dieting and the importance of focusing on balance rather than restriction. The theme for EDAW 2002, "Listen to Your Body," emphasizes the significance of honoring one's natural hunger.

The new Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2002 Coordinator's Packets will make implementing EDAW in your school or community easier than ever. One EDAW coordinator from West Virginia University reviewed the EDAW materials and wrote to say that he "felt confident that (his) event would be a success with the absolutely superb materials provided." He called the EDAW "How-To" guides a "treasure-trove of ideas." Everything you need to plan and implement effective, innovative, and interesting presentations and events is included in the packets.

For more information about Eating Disorders Awareness Week, or to register to become a Coordinator, contact the EDAP office at (206) 382-3587 or visit their Web site at www.NationalEatingDisorders.org. Please join EDAP to spread the message that self-esteem should not be weighed in pounds on a scale!