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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Courtenay Harding, Ph.D. elected to the Board of the Foundation for Excellence in Mental Health Care.**

Courtenay M. Harding, Ph.D. has been elected to the Board of the Foundation for Excellence in Mental Health Care, a newly formed, international community foundation. The Foundation, through its research, practice, education initiatives, and program development, seeks to demonstrate that most people diagnosed with severe mental illnesses can significantly improve and many even fully recover. The Foundation values comprehensive, community-based, peer-supported approaches which endorse collaboration and individual choice. While avoiding approaches that overly focus on the use of psychiatric medications, Foundation projects will help to restore the balance between psychosocial and biological approaches, and in so doing, increase the numbers of people who recover.

Dr. Harding is a professor in the department of psychiatry in the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. She trained at the University of Vermont and Yale. She is now the director of the Center for Rehabilitation and Recovery at the Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies in NYC. Dr. Harding moved to New York from Boston where she was the Senior Director of Boston University's well-known Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation under William Anthony. Among her many research endeavors, Dr. Harding participated in two three-decade NIMH studies of schizophrenia and other serious illnesses and found that many once profoundly disabled persons could and did significantly improve and/ or even fully recovered. Her study in Vermont is now considered a "classic" in community psychiatry. These findings, similar to ten other long-term studies from across the world, helped

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to create the Institute for the Study of Human Resilience in order to investigate ways in which people reclaimed their lives including getting back to work.

To date, Dr. Harding has received 51 federal, state, and foundation grants and contracts for schizophrenia research and studies of mental health services. She has been the recipient of over 46 awards and honors including the Alexander Gralnick Research Investigator Award from the American Psychological Association's foundation for "exceptional contributions to the study of schizophrenia and other serious mental illness and for mentoring a new generation of researchers" Dr. Harding has published nearly 100 papers about schizophrenia, rehabilitation, and recovery and has presented findings from her studies and clinical work in over 525 state, national, and international meetings. She has worked with 30 states, Australia, New Zealand, 11 European, and 9 Asian countries to redesign their systems of care.

Board Chairman and President Virgil Stucker says, *"Imagine a new mainstream where individuals and families, whose lives have been impeded by mental illness, recover. In the face of despair and diminishing public resources, the Foundation is positioned to develop and use creative philanthropy effectively to help hundreds of thousands in the coming years... a great challenge! We are deeply honored by Dr. Courtenay Harding's willingness to help us meet this daunting and critically important task. When first I met Dr. Harding, I knew she was someone of integrity, of genius and of passion... just the kind of person who is needed on the Foundation's Board."*

The Foundation welcomes inquiries from all who seek to improve mental health care. Please learn more about our efforts at [www.MentalHealthExcellence.org](http://www.MentalHealthExcellence.org).