



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 29, 2023

CONTACT: Racine Tucker-Hamilton, Publicity Chairman, 301.922.8417 or racinehamilton@gmail.com

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter Supports Mental Health Awareness in Underserved Communities

Prince George's County, Md. — In partnership with Pearl Elegance Foundation, Inc. (PEF), Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter (PEO) of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® (AKA) is addressing mental health issues for families in Prince George's County during Mental Health Awareness Month.

On May 20, PEO hosted a forum, “Check Up from the Neck Up”, focusing on depression screening and mental health matters for Black women and adolescents. The facilitated discussion was centered around empowering participants to recognize the signs of depression, anxiety, and mental illness as well as learning how to provide support to someone showing signs of a mental illness.

“This event is important, particularly for our community because limited mental health awareness is acute in our community in terms of being able to speak about the ramifications of systemic mental healthcare shortages and how that affects our lives holistically”, said Benita A. Swindell, PEO president. “I think that having this conversation and being able to provide resources and walk through some of the signs of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts is important.”

The diverse panel included mental and behavioral healthcare professionals as well as a panelist that shared her personal experience with clinical depression. The participants were encouraged to advocate for themselves with their practitioners; actively participate in their mental health treatment; and treat mental healthcare with the same level of importance given to physical healthcare. Participants received a Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) to self-assess for signs of depression.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® (AKA) is committed to using our collective efforts to fight stigma and raise awareness related to depression, anxiety, and trauma. This program addressed various mental healthcare stigmas and empowered participants to advocate for themselves and to not suffer in silence.

###

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated®, Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter was chartered in 2007. Since its founding, the chapter has implemented its service programs in Laurel, Bowie, and Greenbelt, Maryland.