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Media Contact:
Melanie Fonder
(202) 715-1568
melanie.fonder@dittus.com

All Other Inquiries:
Brian Altman
(202) 449-3600
baltman@spanusa.org

**Suicide Prevention Action Network USA Executive Director
Keynotes Suicide Prevention Conference**

Jerry Reed Addresses Suicide Prevention Among Older Adults

GRANTVILLE, Pa., September 12, 2007 — Jerry Reed, executive director of the Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA) today spoke about preventing suicide among older adults at the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' Suicide Prevention Conference.

"Suicide among older adults is a serious, but preventable, public health problem," Reed said. "We must work together to do more to raise public awareness of suicide among older adults and to generate political support for policies that will help prevent suicide."

The rate of suicide among older adults is higher than that for any other age group and among those 85 years and older, is the highest rate of all. Nearly 7,000 older adults died by suicide in 2004, the most recent year that statistics are available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Reed discussed the Stop Senior Suicide Act (S. 1854), which was recently introduced by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and would help prevent suicide among older adults.

"Each year, people over 65 years experience the highest suicide rates in the nation – with the risk going up as people age. We know that about three out of four seniors who complete suicide have visited their primary care physician in the past month," Reed said. "This startling statistic is evidence of the important preventative steps we can take, like making sure primary care physicians are addressing mental, as well as physical, health issues with their older patients."

NOTE: To interview Jerry Reed, please contact Melanie Fonder at (202) 715-1568 or melanie.fonder@dittus.com.

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SPAN USA is the nation's only suicide prevention organization dedicated to leveraging grassroots support among suicide survivors and others to advance public policies that prevent suicide. Since its founding in 1996, SPAN USA has led the drive to make suicide a public health priority by building

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political will and calling for the development and implementation of a national strategy for suicide prevention. Using its extensive grassroots network of survivors and advocates, SPAN USA has actively promoted the cause on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures. For more information, please visit www.spanusa.org.

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1025 Vermont Avenue, NW • Suite 1066 • Washington, DC 20005 • Phone: 202-449-3600 • Fax: 202-449-3601

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