



Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DBSA and FFDA Facilitate National Conversation on Mental Health Reform *New Blog Fosters Discussion among Consumers, Families, and Policymakers*

(CHICAGO and WALTHAM, MA, May 1, 2013)—The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) and Families for Depression Awareness (FFDA) are pleased to announce the launch of Care for Your Mind—a new blog focused on sparking conversation about mental health care reform. At CareForYourMind.org, individuals affected by the mental health care system openly discuss its strengths and weaknesses with thought leaders and advocates to help build a system that works.

Reacting to national tragedies including the Newtown shootings, the mental health issues affecting many returning Veterans, and the challenges of implementing the Affordable Care Act, government officials are now urgently discussing mental health care delivery problems and debating policy changes that will profoundly impact people who live with mood disorders, as well as their families. Through CareForYourMind.org, FFDA and DBSA initiate and facilitate active dialogue about emerging policies and regulations that will determine the availability and quality of mental health care services to people with mood disorders and their families.

“It is imperative that our constituents be represented in this conversation. We are committed to ensuring that decision-makers and influencers hear the voices of people who live with mental health conditions; the most informed decisions about mental health reform will consider the experience and perspectives of the individuals who will be directly affected,” says DBSA President Allen Doederlein.

Care for Your Mind strives to help those who stand to lose or gain the most from health reform to understand the issues that policymakers are discussing so that they can become active in the conversation. Each week, experts on mental health care present a challenge faced by mental health care consumers and their families, explain a piece of legislation, posit an idea about improving the system, or otherwise offer insights into our mental health care system. Visitors to the site are invited to share their ideas and personal experiences to help policymakers understand the realities of the mental health care system for individuals living with a mood disorder and their families.

Care for Your Mind seeks a variety of viewpoints that make up the overall picture of the mental health care system and its challenges. These challenges include issues like lack of insurance and limits on coverage, unavailability of qualified mental health care providers, unmet language and cultural needs, and general problems navigating the system to get necessary services.

“Depression is an illness that affects the whole family. And because there are so many barriers to getting mental health care, family members have to actively advocate for their loved ones to get

any services. In our view, family members need to get involved in mental health reform to dismantle these barriers to treatment,” says Julie Totten, President and Founder of FFDA.

Ron Manderscheid, a public health and behavioral health policy professional with more than 30 years of experience in the federal government kicks off the first Care for Your Mind discussion on May 1 with an overview of the mental health care system and challenges to accessing quality mental health care. Manderscheid is the first among a host of experts, policymakers, and other mental health stakeholders who will contribute weekly Expert Perspectives blog posts to CareforYourMind.org.

The Care for Your Mind conversation launches on May 1, 2013.

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About DBSA

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the leading peer-directed national organization focusing on the two most prevalent mental health conditions, depression and bipolar disorder, which affect more than 21 million Americans, account for 90% of the nation’s suicides every year, and cost \$23 billion in lost workdays and other workplace losses. DBSA’s peer-based, wellness-oriented, and empowering services and resources are available when people need them, where they need them, and how they need to receive them—online 24/7, in local support groups, in audio and video casts, or in printed materials distributed by DBSA, our chapters, and mental health care facilities across America. Through more than 700 support groups and nearly 300 chapters, DBSA reaches millions of people each year with in-person and online peer support; current, readily understandable information about depression and bipolar disorder; and empowering tools focused on an integrated approach to wellness.

For more information, please visit www.DBSAAlliance.org or call (800) 826-3632.

About FFDA

Families for Depression Awareness (FFDA) is a national nonprofit organization helping families recognize and cope with depressive disorders to get people well and prevent suicides. FFDA gives families tools and solutions to recognize and manage depression and bipolar disorder; advocates to eliminate the stigma associated with depressive disorders; and works to unite families and help them heal in coping with depressive disorders. Families for Depression Awareness’ website contains rich resources for those seeking help and a wealth of information relating to teen depression and adult/workplace stress and depression, including materials about depressive disorders, family stories, audio podcasts, and webinars. FFDA’s programs and communications demonstrate that people from all walks of life can suffer from depressive disorders, which are the most prevalent mental health conditions and are leading causes of suicide. FFDA provides education, training, and advocacy for family members and friends of those who are depressed, especially caregivers who usually operate with little or no guidance or support. Families for Depression Awareness is made up of families who have lost a family member to suicide or have watched a loved one suffer with depression, many with little knowledge about how to help.

For more information, please visit www.FamilyAware.org or call (781) 890-0220.