



Newsletter of the

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

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MISSION

The mission of the
Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance (DBSA)
is to improve the
lives of people living with
mood disorders.

DBSA Find A Pro

New "Find A Pro" Search Engine!

Need help finding
a mental health
professional or
facility? Visit

**www.DBSAAlliance
.org/FindAPro**
to search,
or add to, our
database of peer
recommendations!

Passing the Torch . . . Continuing Our Journey

For a quarter of a century, DBSA's mission has been to improve the lives of people living with mood disorders. Many different people have led us on that journey, always staying true to our roots: peer-centered hope, help and support. For the past eight years, we've been honored to have Sue Bergeson as our guide. As executive vice president and then as president, she has seen us grow from serving 600,000 to nearly five million people a year. She has seen us expand from offering brochures and chapter services to also providing 65 recovery-oriented programs/ services—like our model peer specialist certification course—designed by consumers for consumers. And now, she says, "It's time for me to accept new challenges ... chase new goals and dreams."

Bergeson is passing the torch to Peter Ashenden, a fellow consumer and advocate and former member and officer on DBSA's board of directors. For the past year, Ashenden has served as DBSA's executive vice president, and on September 1, we welcomed him as our interim president. Ashenden will continue the programs and services begun under Bergeson and establish and oversee new ones. As Bergeson says, "There's more—much more—that DBSA wants to do and is uniquely positioned to do. And I'm fully confident that Peter will lead DBSA into that new future."

As Ashenden leads DBSA into that new future, says DBSA Board Chair Stephen Propst, "the focus of our staff and board of directors will be what it has always been—to find new ways to enhance the support we offer ... innovative ways to empower our peers as they journey toward recovery." Under Bergeson, that empowering support took the form of weekly blogs, whole health peer training, the FacingUs.org Clubhouse and providing over 25 private systems, states and VA networks (VISNs) with guidance, training, testing and certification for the peer workforce. Ashenden will continue this legacy and build upon it. The former executive director of the Mental Health Empowerment Project (MHEP), Ashenden has over 30 years' experience developing and delivering

recovery-oriented services and wellness training for consumers and health care experts.



Bergeson and Ashenden

A consumer himself, he's nationally recognized as a keynote speaker, consultant and trainer, and for his talent in starting many self-help groups and grassroots networks across the country. "I embarked on my own recovery journey in the rooms of self-help support groups over 25 years ago," says Ashenden. "And I'm committed to the wonderful, healthy and social outcomes that come from regularly participating in support groups of all kinds."

This summer, Ashenden was named chair elect of the board

of the U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (USPRA), the nation's leading psychiatric rehabilitation organization. He's the first self-identified consumer ever to hold this position. Propst commends Ashenden as "one of the most committed and knowledgeable consumer advocates I've ever met. His deep knowledge of the issues and his incredible range of experience are the perfect combination to lead DBSA on its journey to create and strengthen consumer-run mental health services, a critical step towards transforming mental health care in America."

This dedication to system transformation is something Bergeson will also carry with her as she takes her next step. She will serve as OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions' vice president of Consumer Affairs, Public Sector—a new position within the company formerly known as United Behavioral Healthcare. In this role, she'll oversee public sector network operations, providing guidance, strategy and fostering a culture of recovery and resiliency. Extending our deepest thanks for her passionate years of service, DBSA's staff and board wish her all the best in this new corner of consumer advocacy. And we warmly welcome Ashenden on the next step in DBSA's journey, as we strive to do even more to improve the lives of more than 21 million of our fellow Americans who live with a mood disorder.

President's Outlook

Finding My Corner in the Sky

For the past several months, I've been unconsciously singing "Corner of the Sky" from the musical *Pippin*. I'm not sure anyone remembers this song, but these are some of the lyrics:

*Every man has his daydreams;
Every man has his goal.
People like the way dreams have
Of sticking to the soul.
Thunderclouds have their lightning;
Nightingales have their song.
And, don't you see, I want my life to be
Something more than long.

Rivers belong where they can ramble;
Eagles belong where they can fly.
I've got to be where my spirit can run free,
Got to find my corner of the sky.*

It's funny how your heart can be working on a problem even when your head isn't. When I finally recognized I was singing this song pretty often—something I haven't done in years—I realized I had the answer to a question I didn't even know I was asking. And the answer was ... it's time for me to move on.

I've long been convinced that health care financing was where system change could truly take place. After all, we change our behavior because it benefits us to do so. And nothing encourages us more than financial incentives. If my insurance covers some things and not others, I'll clearly do those things my insurance covers—at least at first.

What would a consumer-centered, empowering finance system look like? The answer may seem obvious. But to survive economically, this new system will have to impose some limits, and this presents a challenge. But it's a challenge that really, really interests me.

I've accepted a new position as vice president of Consumer Affairs, Public Sector, with OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions (formerly United Behavioral Health). OptumHealth is one of the nation's largest providers of mental health and substance use treatment services, serving over 43 million people.

I'm excited about the new challenges that lie ahead ... and deeply thankful for my time at DBSA. I've worked with the most amazing people and have learned from my peers around the country what we each need to build our recovery. My time with DBSA has been a gift beyond price, and I'm profoundly grateful for all the lessons learned.

I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming meetings and events, as I continue to work side-by-side with my peers. We're all working to build a consumer-centered, recovery-oriented system. I just have a new corner of the sky to work in.



Sue Bergeson

DBSA AND ME

DBSA has totally changed my life ... from a couch potato to an active, busy woman with purpose and meaning in her life. I'd been very ill with bipolar disorder for over 15 years, and although I was beginning to make progress, I still wasn't doing anything with my life. I'd been reading a book on bipolar disorder and looked in the back for more resources when I came upon the phone number for DBSA. I called to see if there were any support groups in Vermont, but there weren't. Well, the nice lady on the phone suggested I start one. I agreed, and DBSA Bennington Area was born about a year and a half ago.



Sue Hohman

Since our beginning in May 2007, we have grown from one support group of five people to two support groups—one with up to 12 attending on any given night and the other with a solid base of four. More than 40 people have come through our doors looking for someone who has "been there." And, for all our efforts, we got DBSA's 2007 "Rookie" Chapter Service Award!

I find now that I'm so busy that I have no time to just sit and stare. I find myself on the phone calling members who need a mid-week encouraging call or setting up plans for our educational event ... and recently our 1st Annual Fundraising Luncheon in early September. I'm also going on air, on a local morning radio show, with my fellow chapter leader, Pam Buchanan, and our group's professional advisor to promote DBSA here in Bennington. Both my psychiatrist and therapist have noted that I take better care of myself ... and that I've gained more strides toward wellness in the past 15 months. I know people count on me to be there for Monday night support group meetings, and I am there. I can do it.

DBSA has improved the life of this girl with a mood disorder!

President of DBSA Bennington Area, Sue Hohman also works with children at local low-income apartments providing them with structured games, crafts and snacks, as well as taking them on field trips. A self-proclaimed wannabe writer, Sue's married with five grown children.

Call for Nominations: 2009 DBSA Board of Directors

Stephen Propst, chair of DBSA's Board of Directors and Judith Cook, PhD, chair of the Board Nominating Committee, request candidate submissions for the 2009-2011 term. Nominations will be considered for positions that become vacant after December 31, 2008.

The Nominating Committee seeks candidates from diverse backgrounds for director positions. Each candidate must agree to serve a three-year term and be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of board service. New directors will be elected at the board's December 2008 meeting.

Any DBSA supporter can nominate a candidate or himself/herself. To receive a nomination form and description of board duties and responsibilities, contact Ariel Brenner at (800) 826-3632, ext. 173.



Randy Revelle, JD

From Chair Stephen Propst

For this issue of Outreach, I've asked Randy Revelle, DBSA Vice Chair, to share his thoughts with you. Randy and I joined DBSA's board of directors together, almost six years ago. The former executive of King County, Washington, he is now senior vice president of policy and public affairs for the Washington State Hospital Association. He's a leading expert on parity, a knowledgeable and outspoken consumer advocate and a true friend to DBSA.

Overcoming the Stigma

I have lived with a serious mental illness since I was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder more than 30 years ago in October 1977. After experiencing a series of frightening psychotic episodes, I was convinced I would lose my family and friends, my career and even my mind. Fortunately, I was wrong.

I have been lucky to have the resources needed to cope with a serious mental illness. After overcoming discrimination, I received an accurate diagnosis, as well as appropriate medication and treatment. To overcome the stigma of mental illness, my father wisely advised me to **tell the truth** about my mental illness to anyone who asked. My wife and our two daughters gave me the love and support needed to follow my father's wise advice.

Being open and honest about mental illness is never easy, but it's critical to recovering from the

illness, overcoming the stigma and leading a productive and enjoyable life. Overcoming the stigma requires the understanding and support of family, friends and colleagues. One will not be successful, however, if he or she doesn't take personal responsibility for speaking out and conquering the fear, ignorance and shame wrongly associated with mental illness.

Although the public's understanding of mental illnesses and their treatment has improved, perceptions and experiences of stigma still exact a heavy toll on individuals, caregivers and social policy. It's often more difficult to overcome the stigma of mental illness than to recover from the illness itself!

The ongoing stigma of mental illness prevents people from acknowledging their illness and seeking treatment. The stigma and discrimination tells individuals with a mental illness they are not valued by our society. **No one should be ashamed of having a mental illness.**

Being open and honest about mental illness can enrich the lives of friends and colleagues, and each one of us can make a difference in the lives of people living with a mental illness. They deserve **parity**, not discrimination; **compassion**, not indifference; **understanding**, not ignorance; and **respect**, not stigma.

Working together, we can help create a just, humane and healthy society—a society in which all people are accorded respect, dignity and the opportunity to achieve their full potential free from stigma and discrimination.

The Facing Us Music Contest—You Be the Judge!

During this election season, a lot of candidates out there are asking you to examine the issues and cast your vote. DBSA is asking for your vote, too, but there's nothing political about this "election." And the only issue to examine is music!

The race is on for the winners of the **Facing Us 2008 Music Contest**, sponsored by DBSA and Dave's Spark: Start Something. And in the spirit of *American Idol*, we want you to be the judge. Now through October 1, cast your vote at www.FacingUsContest.org for the music with the creative spark that most inspires you. All entries are original work, performed by artists who identify themselves as having experienced depression or bipolar disorder. Let their music speak to you, and then tell us what you think. Your votes deter-

mine the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners!

We received many songs—funny, healing, inspirational—from many talented artists (thank you all!). After considering each one's general appeal, the strength and appropriateness of its lyrics and the strength of its melody and musician craftsmanship, DBSA selected 12 "finalists" to post on www.FacingUsContest.org for voting. After we tally your votes for the top three, DBSA will produce a compilation CD of those winning songs, along with the other finalists' entries. We'll also showcase the top three on www.FacingUsContest.org, and in the media room of the FacingUs.org Clubhouse.



Vote for your top three musical "candidates" at www.FacingUsContest.org!



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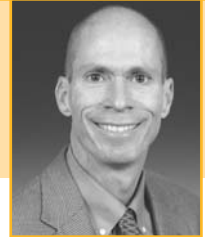
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Scientific Advisory Board Update

How a Pro Finds a Pro

Greg Simon, MD, MPH
SAB Chair



At least once a week, I get a call asking me to recommend a psychiatrist or therapist in some other city. Sometimes, someone will immediately come to mind. But more often, I go to the DBSA website to look at your recommendations.

It may come as no surprise that some people question whether consumers can really give valid, or unbiased, ratings of mental health providers. The arguments are predictable: "People who are depressed will give negative ratings no matter what ... Ratings tell us more about consumers' personalities (or personality disorders) than they tell us about providers."

But, like most prejudices about people living with mood disorders, these arguments just don't hold up.

Research finds that consumer ratings can give us a valid picture of how mental health providers compare to each other. On average, people who receive a diagnosis of depression (or even personality disorder) don't give different ratings of how well mental health providers understood their concerns or provided support. Consumers making a return visit do give more positive ratings. But that probably means that people satisfied with the care from their provider are

more likely to go back to that provider.

Of course, we have to be careful drawing conclusions from just one person's experience. It's no different from reading online restaurant or hotel ratings—you pay more attention when several people are saying similar things. And research certainly supports that idea. Consumer ratings of mental health providers are more valid and reliable when we take the average of several ratings. Disagreement can tell us a lot. If a provider gets both positive and not-so-positive comments, what that tells us is that she or he is a good fit for some consumers and not for others.

We learn the most from the most experienced consumers. If you've seen several psychiatrists or therapists over time, you've got a clearer view of what makes each of them different. And your opinions are especially useful to those who are just starting out.

We've just launched the new **Find A Pro** search engine on the DBSA website. (You can read more about it in the article below.) Please do visit. And please do contribute your own recommendations and comments. All of us together know so much more than any one of us alone.

Announcing the "Find A Pro" Search Engine

DBSA is excited to offer **Find A Pro**, a new resource for peers to find, and recommend, mental health professionals! You can search a list of providers and facilities recommended by others living with a mood disorder at www.DBSAlliance.org/FindAPro. To find the right provider for you, you can search by city, zip code, type of professional, specialty, gender, age and language(s) spoken.



If you know an outstanding mental health provider or facility, please share your hope, help and support through **Find A Pro!** Your recommendation will help us build our database. But, more

importantly, you will provide an invaluable service to your peers. As a personal message from someone

who has "been there," your recommendation can help others through the often confusing, overwhelming process of finding a provider. And, as Dr. Greg Simon says above, your recommendation can actually help providers themselves who are looking for referrals for patients who might be relocating to a new area.

The first 2,000 people to submit a personal recommendation to **Find A Pro** will receive a special DBSA lapel pin, as a small token of our thanks. They'll also have the chance to enter a drawing for one of two beautiful Swarovski crystal bracelets, handmade by jewelry artist and consumer Sharon Baum Crawford.

Help improve the lives of people living with mood disorders. Help your peers **Find A Pro!**



DBSA 2008 NATIONAL CONFERENCE • NORFOLK, VA

Held September 10–14, in Norfolk, Virginia, the **DBSA 2008 National Conference** will be remembered for many reasons: the pre- and post-conference institutes for consumers, families, veterans and peer specialists; the educational breakout sessions and all-new "Power of Peers" roundtables; a special stand-up comedy night; and presentations by renowned speakers Kay Redfield Jamison, PhD; Richard Cohen; Pat Deegan, PhD; and Larry Fricks. The full story on this powerful, peer-centered conference will be available in the next editions of e-Update and *Outreach*, so stay tuned!

Visit www.DBSAlliance.org/FindAPro to recommend a mental health professional or facility, or search for one in your area.



Chapter Highlights

Chapter Successes: Building Teams and Connections

☀️ On September 18, **DBSA Colorado Springs (Colo.)** partners with three other mental health, wellness and prevention organizations to exchange views and ideas on topics critical to the government's role in promoting and sustaining mental health. For more information about this event, please contact Steve Bell at (719) 477-1515 or help@DBSAColoradoSprings.org.

☀️ **DBSA Bennington Area (Vt.) chapter leaders, Sue Hohman and Pam Buchanan**, join their community's chapter professional advisor to speak on a local radio morning show in Bennington. They'll talk about the availability and function of DBSA support groups, how they can help and what others in the community can do to help people living with mood disorders.

☀️ The Tennessee Mental Health Consumers Association has teamed up with local area consumers to award **Larry Drain, chapter leader of DBSA Blount County (Tenn.)**, the Don Boyette Award for "Extraordinary Volunteerism" in the consumer mental health movement within his community. Larry and many other DBSA chapter leaders show us that volunteering your time to a cause that brings people together based on a lived experience leads to powerful and positive outcomes in that community.

To get involved in your local community's chapter, please visit



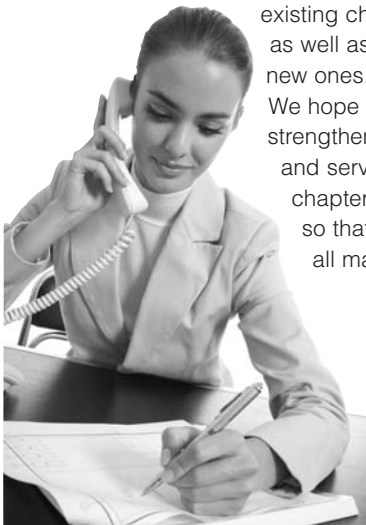
www.DBSAlliance.org/FindSupport.

Chapter Quality Teleconferences: Building a Team of Stronger Chapters

Each and every day, we in the DBSA Chapter Relations Department see peer support reaching more and more communities in the form of chapters and support groups. While we want to be sure that people in every city and town have access to support through a DBSA group, we also want to keep providing our already-established chapters with ways to keep growing and developing.

To that end, DBSA is implementing new, quality-enhancing tools and resources to

further assist our existing chapters, as well as our new ones. We hope to strengthen and serve our chapters, so that we all may



continue finding new, innovative ways to offer support and improve the lives of those living with mood disorders.

One of these quality-enhancing resources is the **Chapter Quality Teleconference** series. DBSA began this series as a free, monthly service this past May. It gives chapter participants the chance to learn more about topics like peer specialists, recovery dialogues, advocacy, fundraising, identifying and developing leaders ... and much more!

Held on alternating nights, the teleconferences are also recorded and posted on DBSA's Recovery Education Center website. This way, participants—as well as chapter members who weren't able to be on the call—can access any segment of the series at any time. The Chapter Quality Teleconference series will continue through the end of the year to help all DBSA chapters continue their growth and development.

The next Chapter Quality Teleconference is Tuesday, October 21, from 7:00–8:00 p.m., Central Daylight Time (CDT). To learn more, or to RSVP, visit www.DBSAlliance.org/ChapterQuality.



New Chapters

Chapters affiliating between May 1, 2008, and July 31, 2008

DBSA Heart of the Santa Ynez Valley (Calif.)

DBSA High Desert/Morongo Basin (Calif.)

DBSA Los Angeles (Calif.)

DBSA Santa Cruz County Moms (Calif.)

DBSA South Bay (Calif.)

DBSA Branford (Conn.)

DBSA Blairsville (Ga.)

DBSA Greater Elgin Area (Ill.)

DBSA Lansing, IL (Ill.)

DBSA Scenic City–Iowa Falls (Iowa)

DBSA Spring Harbor Hospital (Maine)

DBSA Anne Arundel County (Md.)

DBSA Lower Shore (Md.)

DBSA Metro Baltimore (Md.)

DBSA Western Maryland (Md.)

DBSA Twin Cities (Mich.)

DBSA Mississippi Gulf Coast (Miss.)

DBSA Greater Seacoast, NH (N.H.)

DBSA Long Island (N.Y.)

DBSA Clermont County (Ohio)

DBSA Ponca City (Okla.)

DBSA North Oregon & South Washington Coast (Ore.)

DBSA Armstrong County Veterans (Penn.)

DBSA Hamilton County, TN (Tenn.)

DBSA Oak Ridge (Tenn.)

DBSA Rio Grande Valley (Tex.)

DBSA Burlington (Vt.)

DBSA Green Bay, WI (Wis.)

DBSA Sauk County (Wis.)

Making Dreams Come True

The **3rd Annual Rebecca's Dream Gala** is coming up this fall on **Saturday, November 8**, in Chicago. Raising awareness and understanding of bipolar disorder and depression, the evening also raises money for the Rebecca Lynn Cutler Legacy of Life Foundation, which supports many DBSA educational events and activities. Last year's Gala raised over \$270,000, which has made the following dreams come true:

- **Scholarships for this year's "Power of Peers" Conference:** For nearly 20 people who wouldn't have been able to attend otherwise, these scholarships alleviated some of the costs associated with the DBSA 2008 National Conference (e.g., hotel, transportation and food).
- **"At Home with Wellness" Pre-Conference Institute with Julie Fast:** Julie Fast is a best-selling author, radio host and consumer, as well as the host of this special session, held before the 2008 National Conference. Exploring the way mood disorders affect people and their families, the session offers a renewed sense of hope, helpful communication techniques and a complimentary copy of Julie's book, *Take Charge of Bipolar Disorder*.
- **New Family Support Groups:** Rebecca's Dream is helping DBSA provide peer support through a grant process for our chapters, allowing them to start new family support groups. Family-focused online support groups are also being added.
- **A New Online Family Education Center:** Coming this fall, the innovative Rebecca's Dream Family Education

Center will include videos and materials from Julie Fast's pre-conference institute, as well as podcasts, author chats and much more!

Visit www.RebeccasDream.org to learn more, and support the 3rd Annual Rebecca's Dream Gala. Help us make even more dreams come true in 2009!



November's Gala to Honor Illinois Lt. Governor Pat Quinn

Illinois Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn will receive the 2008 Rebecca's Dream "Legacy of Life Award" this fall in Chicago at the 3rd Annual Rebecca's Dream Gala. Presented by DBSA and the Rebecca Lynn Cutler Legacy of Life Foundation, the award honors Quinn for his promotion of health care for Illinois citizens, including returning veterans' mental health care. Since Quinn's reelection in November 2006, he has helped to transform veterans' health care in his home state in ways that have become national models. His achievements include



- Proposing the Veterans Care program, now a law offering health care coverage

- to uninsured Illinois veterans
- Driving the creation of *www.OperationHomefront.org*, one of the nation's most informative websites for the military and their families
- Helping win passage of a law that includes PTSD as a mental illness that insurance companies must cover
- Helping establish Veterans Cash, a state lottery that supports local veterans with 100% of its proceeds.

Since 2006, it has raised almost \$6 million. The money is earmarked for such expenses as health insurance costs and PTSD research/treatment for veterans. Through this program, DBSA received a \$100,000 grant this year to establish peer support groups for veterans living with PTSD.

What Would You Do with \$10,000?

If you woke up today and found out you won \$10,000, what would you do? Your wish list would probably be endless. Where would you start? At DBSA, we're asking ourselves the same question, because we did win \$10,000, in the form of a challenge grant from the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation. But there's a catch! The Foundation will donate this very generous sum ... but only if you can help us match that amount, through the **Ignite the Light campaign**, before this December 31!

Our wish list is a long one, too. Thanks to your support, we're able to help people in

new ways: through whole health peer training, the "Find A Pro" search engine, the Election Center, etc. And there are so many more people who need our hope, help and support. We were reminded of that this summer, after "Dear Abby" ran a column on June 2 mentioning DBSA support groups. Our phones rang off the hook here in Chicago. The three staff members taking the calls were overwhelmed—both by the number of



To "Ignite the Light" for those on the road to recovery, visit www.DBSAlliance.org/Ignite.

For more information about how your gift helps others, visit www.DBSAlliance.org/DonorBenefits or call (800) 826-3632, ext. 166.

calls that kept coming and the heartbreaking stories the callers shared with them. They need our help ... and we need yours.

Please help us match the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation's compassionate gift. Make a donation at www.DBSAlliance.org/Ignite. Brighten someone else's path ... and brighten your own.

DBSA to Roll Out First Whole Health Peer Training in U.S.

DBSA is always looking for new ways to carry out our mission to “improve the lives of people living with mood disorders.” And that involves finding ways to help people improve their whole health—their mental health and physical health. One way we’re doing that is through a special type of peer training course. This past May, in Battle Creek, Michigan, 35 people took part in a pilot training course in whole health recovery. Once it’s finalized, DBSA will roll out this training—the first of its kind in the nation—offering it to many other communities.

Funded by Michigan’s Mental Health and Substance Abuse Administration, the pilot training is part of DBSA’s response to the news that “people with serious mental illness served by public mental health systems die ... 25 years earlier than the general population” (*Morbidity and Mortality in People with Serious Mental Illness* report, October 2006, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, NASMHPD). The May pilot program included peer-

supported exercise, nutrition and smoking cessation. It also addressed a practice called the relaxation response. This practice helps reduce stress and the release of a stress hormone called cortisol. Stress hormones like cortisol are triggered by the fight-or-flight response crucial to the survival of all animals. And cortisol has profound impacts on our bodies; it has been shown to increase belly fat, considered the most dangerous fat of all.

One of the leading researchers on stress and the fight-or-flight response is Dr. Herbert Benson, who founded the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. DBSA has worked with this institute, the state of Michigan and Georgia’s Appalachian Consulting Group to develop this new, peer-supported whole health training. Some of the training is also adapted from the research of Dr. Benjamin Druss, the Rosalynn Carter Chair of Mental Health at Emory University’s Rollins School of Public Health. Druss is working to modify a peer

support chronic disease program—one developed by Kate Lorig, RN, DrPH, at Stanford University—so that it can be used in the public mental health system. His project is funded by the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH).

DBSA is honored to collaborate with such outstanding organizations and researchers to improve the mental and physical health—the whole health—of the consumer community.

Headline News

**A First—Consumer Named
USPRA Chair Elect**
www.DBSAlliance.org/USPRA

**Allen Daniels Joins DBSA
as VP of Scientific Affairs**
www.DBSAlliance.org/Daniels



To learn more, contact DBSA at (800) 826-3632, ext. 155,
or at PeerSupport@DBSAlliance.org.



Get Informed . . . at DBSA’s New Election Center

Not registered to vote? Want to find out Obama’s and McCain’s position on health care for children? Curious about the mental health legislation that’s pending in Congress? You can learn about all this—and more—at DBSA’s new online Election Center, www.DBSAlliance.org/Vote.

At this one-stop shop, you’ll find everything you need to help you make those important decisions at the polls on November 4.

Through the Election Center site, you can

- Compare how the candidates voted on particular issues in Congress.
- Register to vote and find a polling place.
- Learn about absentee ballots.
- Learn how the presidential election process works.
- Learn the role of the electoral college in electing the president.
- Learn how U.S. senators and representatives are elected.



It’s often said that, in a democracy, the majority rules. However, that’s not really true. It’s the majority that’s vocal—who gets involved and votes—that has the real power. Ours is a nation of more than 280 million people, and there are millions of us living with depression and bipolar disorder.

Think how much easier it would be to bring about real change if everyone took the time to vote!

If you’re asking yourself “What difference will my one vote make, among 280 million others?”, consider this: many elections have been decided by fewer than 100 votes! And doing nothing, in a sense, becomes a vote—for the status quo. Not voting is comparable to not caring—about your own and others’ future. If you don’t make the effort to vote, whether absentee or in person, then you have no grounds to complain if a candidate is elected who opposes the issues important to you.

Remember, what matters in November’s election is not the red vote (Republican) or the blue vote (Democrat)—what matters most is the “you” vote.



Visit the DBSA Election Center at www.DBSAlliance.org/Vote.

