



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Joint Commission Launches Educational Campaign on Adult Depression *Educational Brochure Provides Guidance on Recognizing and Treating Depression*

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – May 21, 2013) The Joint Commission has launched a new Speak Up™ campaign during Mental Health Awareness Month to help people become better informed about the common warning signs of adult depression, how to get the most out of treatments for depression, and advice for how to speak up if they or a loved one needs help. The campaign, "[Speak Up: What you should know about adult depression.](#)" centers on a new brochure and poster which were developed in collaboration with the [American Psychiatric Association](#), [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#), [Mental Health America](#), [NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), [National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems](#), [National Association of Social Workers](#), [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#), [National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors](#), and [National Institute of Mental Health](#).

The campaign emphasizes that while everyone may feel unhappy or sad at one time or another, depression is more than just feeling sad, especially if those feelings last for more than two weeks. When an individual experiences depression it can significantly affect their everyday life, causing them to lose interest in activities, feel overwhelmed, agitated, isolated or even become suicidal. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 18.8 million Americans experience depressive symptoms that affect how they sleep, eat, feel about themselves and their lives in the span of a year. The CDC also cites depression as the most prevalent mental health problem among older adults.

While the Speak Up brochure explains that adult depression has physical and emotional impacts and cannot be wished or willed away, it also stresses that depression can be treated and people suffering from depression can recover. "We know that adult depression is a very widespread issue that can affect anyone in any demographic for a wide variety of reasons," says Mary Cesare-Murphy, Ph.D., executive director, Behavioral Health Care Accreditation, The

Joint Commission. “While it may be widespread, it is also a very serious condition that should be treated to improve and save lives, which is why we created the campaign.”

The Joint Commission’s Speak Up campaign on adult depression provides information on the condition’s common causes and warning signs, what questions to ask a doctor or therapist, and advice for how individuals can speak up if they or a loved one needs help. “Anyone who thinks that they or a loved one may be struggling with depression can learn more about the warning signs and how to get help from this Speak Up brochure,” says Paul Schyve, M.D., senior adviser for healthcare improvement, The Joint Commission.

The new adult depression education campaign is part of the award-winning Speak Up program. The Speak Up program urges people to take an active role in their own health care. The basic framework of the Speak Up campaign urges patients to:

Speak up if you have questions or concerns, and if you don't understand, ask again. It's your body and you have a right to know.

Pay attention to the care you are receiving. Make sure you're getting the right treatments and medications by the right health care professionals. Don't assume anything.

Educate yourself about your diagnosis, the medical tests you are undergoing, and your treatment plan.

Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate.

Know what medications you take and why you take them. Medication errors are the most common health care errors.

Use a hospital, mental health clinic, or other type of health care organization that has undergone a rigorous on-site evaluation against established state-of-the-art quality and safety standards, such as that provided by The Joint Commission.

Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team.

Speak Up brochures also are available on the topics of pain management, stroke, breastfeeding, dialysis patients who are hospitalized, diabetes patients who are hospitalized, visiting the doctor’s office, understanding medical tests, recovering after leaving the hospital, preventing medication mistakes, preventing infections, health literacy, preparing to become a living organ donor, avoiding mistakes in your surgery, preventing errors in care, and palliative care.

Since its launch in 2002, the Speak Up program has grown to include 21 campaign brochures eight animated videos and 14 posters, free downloadable files of all Speak Up videos, brochures and posters (including Spanish language versions of the brochures and

videos) are available on The Joint Commission website at:

<http://www.jointcommission.org/speakup.aspx>. Speak Up brochures and posters also are available for purchase through Joint Commission Resources at 877-223-6866 or online at www.jcrinc.com.

To sign up to receive future issues of Speak Up™, please go to http://www.jointcommission.org/thickbox/NewsletterSignUp.aspx?KeepThis=true&TB_iframe=true&height=480&width=640 to join the Speak Up™ E-alerts list.

Statements of support for the “Speak Up: What you should know about adult depression” campaign

“There is help and hope for people struggling with depression. That’s why it is so critical for all Americans to understand more about the warning signs of serious depression. Knowing when and how to seek help can make a life-saving difference. The National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems is pleased to partner with The Joint Commission to share this important information.”

Kathleen McCann, RN, Ph.D., director, Quality and Regulatory Affairs, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems

“Depression is common, affecting an estimated one in ten Americans. It can affect people at different levels and it can be a chronic and disabling condition. But effective treatments are available and people do not need to suffer. Overcoming the stigma of mental illness can often be the biggest barrier to individuals seeking help. The American Psychiatric Association is pleased to collaborate with The Joint Commission’s new Speak Up for Depression campaign to address the issue of stigma, to increase awareness about depression, and to encourage individuals experiencing symptoms of depression to seek help.”

Dilip Jeste, M.D., president, American Psychiatric Association

“As an organization that launched the first public education campaigns on depression, Mental Health America is proud to partner to with The Joint Commission on this important initiative. The Speak Up campaign will help increase awareness and educate people that depression is a real health condition that can be successfully treated. We know what works and we can help millions living with depression. In that spirit, Mental Health America has just launched a National Mental Health Screening campaign using the ‘What’s My Mood’ M3 screening tool that screens simultaneously for Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder and PTSD. We encourage everyone to speak up and ask for help.”

Wayne W. Lindstrom, Ph.D., president and CEO, Mental Health America

“Depression is fundamentally about hopelessness and helplessness, and affects all issues related to public health. The Joint Commission’s Speak Up program is an important effort to promote help in ways that can bring hope, through providing practical information about symptoms, care and treatment related to this highly treatable mental illness.”

John Draper, Ph.D., director of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, and president of Link2Health Solutions, Inc.

“As the leading peer-directed national organization focusing on the two most prevalent mental health conditions, the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) provides hope, help, support, and education to improve the lives of people who have mood disorders. DBSA creates the opportunity for meaningful lives by compassionately engaging with individuals and providing peer-led support groups, educational materials, and wellness tools that focus on resiliency, achievement, creativity, and connection. Individuals living with depression can, and do, live fulfilling lives, but the first step is recognizing the symptoms and seeking appropriate treatment. DBSA is pleased to partner with the Joint Commission on its Speak Up campaign on depression to educate and inform the public about how to identify and take the first steps towards finding a path to wellness.”

Allen Doederlein, president, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

“The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) works as a partner with the Joint Commission in addressing mental health concerns. It is equally important that individuals who experience symptoms of depression approach their primary care doctors or mental health professionals as partners in care. Everyone, including family members and friends, need to know warning signs, where to get help, and key questions to ask about medication and therapy. The Joint Commission’s campaign will educate and inspire many people. It will help save lives. Most of all, it will let people know that there is no shame in speaking up and getting help when it is needed.”

Kenneth Duckworth, M.D., medical director, National Alliance on Mental Illness

“Depression is a common and serious disorder that all too often goes undiagnosed and untreated. The Speak Up brochure offers clear and concise information about depression and a roadmap for seeking help and communicating with a health practitioner. The National Institute of Mental Health, part of the National Institutes of Health, is engaged in research to deepen our understanding of depression and open up avenues for new treatments; through this campaign by the Joint Commission, people affected by depression can have access to accurate information on this disorder and on the help that is available to them now.”

Thomas R. Insel, M.D., director, National Institute of Mental Health

“Depression affects millions of people. There are ways to help support yourself and those you care about. That is why the National Association of Social Workers is pleased to join The Joint Commission’s new Speak Up campaign regarding adult depression. The campaign aims at helping people better understand the warning signs, risks, treatment options, and how to get help.”

Sharon S. Issurdatt, LCSW, senior practice associate, National Association of Social Workers

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Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 20,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including more than 10,600 hospitals and home care organizations, and more than 6,600 other health care organizations that provide long term care, behavioral health care, laboratory and ambulatory care services. The Joint Commission also certifies more than 2,400 disease-specific care programs such as stroke, heart failure, joint replacement and stroke rehabilitation, and 400 health care staffing services. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at www.jointcommission.org.

