



**Depression and Bipolar
Support Alliance**

CONTACT: Gloria Pope
(312) 988-1164
gpope@DBSAlliance.org

Karen Kraft
(312) 988-1178
kkraft@DBSAlliance.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Celebrities and Bipolar Disorder
Helpful Information for Everyone**

(CHICAGO, January 7, 2008) – Speculation about bipolar disorder in celebrities has been in the news lately. While DBSA does not support speculation about anyone's diagnosis, believing that this is a matter best discussed in the privacy of a doctor-patient relationship, the following information and resources may be helpful in understanding more about this common medical condition.

Bipolar disorder (also known as manic depression) is a treatable illness marked by extreme changes in mood, thought, energy and behavior. It is not a character flaw or a sign of personal weakness. Bipolar disorder is also known as manic depression because a person's mood can alternate between the "poles" of mania (highs) and depression (lows). These changes in mood, or "mood swings," can last for hours, days, weeks or months.

About 5.7 million American adults, or about 2.6 percent of the population age 18 and older in any given year,* have bipolar disorder. The illness typically develops in late adolescence or early adulthood. However, some people have their first symptoms during childhood, while others develop them late in life. It is often not recognized as an illness, and people may suffer for years before receiving a proper diagnosis and treatment. Like diabetes or heart disease, bipolar disorder is a long-term illness that must be carefully managed throughout a person's life.

Celebrities who have spoken openly about their diagnoses include Maurice Benard, Patty Duke, Carrie Fisher, Linda Hamilton and Margot Kidder.

For a list of symptoms of bipolar disorder's depressive and manic phases, visit www.DBSAlliance.org/about_bipolar_overview.



Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

For an entertaining, easy-to-understand 30-second video explaining the illness, visit <https://www.FacingUs.org/media/7/video>. This video (or any others in the free collection on this site) can be formatted and sent on request.

*Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of twelve-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 2005 Jun; 62(6): 617-27.

To learn more about DBSA, visit www.DBSAAlliance.org.

###

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is the nation's leading patient-directed organization focusing on depression and bipolar disorder. The organization, which has more than 1,000 support groups nationwide, fosters an understanding about the impact and management of these life-threatening illnesses by providing up-to-date, scientifically based tools and information.

Assisted by a 65-member scientific advisory board comprised of the leading researchers and clinicians in the field of mood disorders, DBSA supports research to promote more timely diagnosis, develop more effective and tolerable treatments, and discover a cure.

Nearly 5 million people receive information and assistance each year.

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