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For more information contact: Kevin Williams, kwilliams@dbsalliance.org

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR SUPPORT ALLIANCE LAUNCHES NATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAM TO ENLIST PEDIATRICIAN SUPPORT FOR EXPANDING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Campaign Offers Free Resources for Pediatricians to Use In-Office and Provide to Parents

CHICAGO – The Covid-19 pandemic has inflicted a considerable toll on the mental health of many Americans. Perhaps no group’s mental health status has been more impacted than that of children. Recent data shows that more than 20% of 5–12-year-olds report worsened mental health since the start of the pandemic. The U.S. Surgeon General has declared youth mental health a crisis and has called upon all health providers to help address the mental health needs of parents and their children.

To address this growing mental health concern in the aftermath of the pandemic, the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), a leading national peer-based organization focusing on mood disorders has partnered with the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation to launch a national outreach program to pediatricians to enlist their help in expanding access to mental health resources for children and their parents and caregivers. The program reached more than 5,000 pediatricians across the country.

The program’s resources, offered free of cost, include information on the benefits of mental health screenings. The program also offers information about the DBSA Mood Crew®, an emotional literacy resource that was developed to help parents and caregivers, as well as educators and clinicians, begin important conversations with children ages 4-10 on mental health. The Mood Crew consists of 10 emotion-based characters and accompanying activities to help children learn about emotions.

DBSA also provides pediatricians with information about its support groups for friends and family members, as well as parents and caregivers, and its Parent and Caregiver Network online community, which empowers parents with education, wellness tools, and peer support.

“The American Academy of Pediatrics and American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have identified pediatric providers as critical gateways for expanded access to mental health screening and care,” said Michael Pollock, CEO of DBSA. “We are thankful for the support from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation that has made it possible for us to deliver essential mental health resources to pediatricians to use in their office and provide to parents. More information about resources to pediatricians can be found on our website at www.dbsalliance.org/pediatricians.”

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is a leading national organization focusing on mood disorders, including depression and bipolar disorder, which affect over 21 million Americans, account for over 50% of the nation’s suicides every year, and cost \$23 billion in lost workdays and other workplace losses. Through its extensive online and print resources and nearly 400 support groups, DBSA reaches millions of people each year with in-person and online peer support.

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