



# OPEN LETTER ON ANTIDEPRESSANTS

As advocates for people living with depression and other mental illnesses, we strongly urge the FDA to carefully consider the potential impact of the agency's public statements on the risks and benefits of antidepressants. Access to effective treatments for depression is pivotal in improving the lives of the 19 million Americans that face this devastating illness each year.

Depression can be a debilitating and even fatal illness; yet, despite the wide availability of effective treatments, fewer than half of Americans with depression seek help. This is despite a deep science base that shows treatment works and that medication is often a critical tool in treating depression. In fact, untreated depression carries far greater risk than any potential risk of adverse effects of medication.

It is important to draw lessons from previous pediatric warnings and ensuing media coverage that created barriers to care and unnecessarily scared families away from treatment. The best way to protect the public health is to increase awareness about mental illnesses and treatment options, encourage proper monitoring of patients in treatment and communicate balanced information that helps patients and their families cope and properly treat these terrible illnesses.

Our non-profit national mental health advocacy and medical professional organizations represent consumers, physicians, researchers and the top experts in the field of mental health and neuroscience. For more information about mental illness and treatment, we recommend that you talk to your health care provider or visit our organization websites.

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry • [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)
- American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry • [www.aagponline.org](http://www.aagponline.org)
- American College of Neuropsychopharmacology • [www.acnp.org](http://www.acnp.org)
- American Association of Suicidology • [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention • [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)
- American Psychiatric Association • [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org)
- American Psychotherapy Association • [www.americanpsychotherapy.com](http://www.americanpsychotherapy.com)
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder • [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)
- Families for Depression Awareness • [www.familyaware.org](http://www.familyaware.org)
- Kristin Brooks Hope Center • [www.hopeline.com](http://www.hopeline.com)
- Mental Health America • [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness • [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
- Suicide Awareness Voices of Education • [www.save.org](http://www.save.org)
- Suicide Prevention Action Network • [www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org)
- The Jason Foundation, Inc • [www.jasonfoundation.com](http://www.jasonfoundation.com)