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Mental Health America Responds to FDA Label Changes for Antidepressants

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ALEXANDRIA, Va. (May 2, 2007) - Today the Food and Drug Administration released labeling changes for antidepressant medications that would expand a warning regarding suicidal thoughts and actions - not actual suicide - to include all those under the age of 25.

Mental Health America works with experts and individuals with personal experience with depression who are available for comment.

Depression is a serious health problem that affects 19 million American adults each year. Left untreated, it can lead to problems at home, at work and with peers - as well as to life-threatening problems such as heart disease, substance abuse and suicide. In fact, 90 percent of all suicides are attributable to an untreated or under-treated mental or substance abuse disorder, particularly depression. Fortunately, depression is highly treatable with therapy, medication or a combination of the two.

Mental Health America offers the following tips on how individuals with depression and their family members can best approach this new information and labeling.

- Seek help if you feel depressed or experience distress that affects your daily life.
- Request a full evaluation from a doctor. Discuss all available treatment options and carefully weigh the risks and benefits associated with each. If your provider prescribes an antidepressant, make sure to request continual follow-ups and careful monitoring - particularly in the first several weeks.
- Know the warning signs of suicide and act quickly if concerned. Many people are afraid to discuss suicide, but it is actually better to be open and direct.

- Separate "fact from fiction" by using credible sources based on sound medical science rather than rumor or opinion. Beware of extreme claims, such as antidepressants are "always dangerous" or "never effective." Such statements are harmful and misleading.
- Remember that the worst possible situation for anyone with depression is to go without any treatment at all.
- If you take an antidepressant, do not abruptly discontinue use. This can lead to significant side effects. Instead, discuss any concerns with your treatment provider.

For more information on depression, treatments and other topics, visit

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/>.

***Mental Health America** is the country's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping ALL people live mentally healthier lives. With our more than 320 affiliates nationwide, we represent a growing movement of Americans who promote mental wellness for the health and well-being of the nation - everyday and in times of crisis.*