

African Americans and Mood Disorders Information Kit from Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

There is a silent health crisis devastating the African American community.

A study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) reported in March 2007 that fewer than half of African Americans living with major depression receive treatment for this illness. Among all participants, African Americans had the highest rate of chronic depression—nearly 57 percent—compared to about 39 percent of non-Hispanic white Americans. Those experiencing severe depression in the African American community stated that they were unable to function for 71 days (almost 20 percent) of the year. Additionally, the National Comorbidity Survey states that African Americans are less likely to be diagnosed with bipolar disorder and more likely to be misdiagnosed with schizophrenia. Contributing to these disturbing trends are factors such as disparate access to appropriate and consistent care and the stigma of mental illness within the African American community.

In light of this alarming data, the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) is offering an information kit entitled **African Americans and Mood Disorders: Resources for Physicians and Patients**. It contains information such as the following:

- recognizing symptoms and communicating effectively
- common pitfalls on the road to recovery with possible solutions and resources
- a physician's reference on the sometimes subtle differences between depression and bipolar disorder diagnoses

DBSA is the nation's leading patient-directed organization focusing on depression and bipolar disorder. For more information, please call (800) 826-3632 or visit DBSA's website, **www.DBSAAlliance.org**.