



## NEWS FROM **CONGRESS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 23, 2009

Contacts: Matt Williams (Stabenow): 202-224-1437  
Jennifer Scoggins (Voinovich): 202-224-6296  
Megan Dubyak (Brown): 202-224-3978  
Jodi Seth (Kerry): 202-224-4159

### Stabenow, Voinovich, Brown, Kerry Announce Bi-Partisan Legislation to Help Treat Americans Suffering from Depression and Bipolar Disorders

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), George Voinovich (R-OH), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and John Kerry (D-MA) announced the bi-partisan “ENHANCED Act” to establish national centers of excellence for the treatment of depression and bipolar disorders. These centers will create a national network to help diagnose people in need and improve access to evidence-based, quality care. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) is also a co-sponsor.

“Depression and bipolar disorders affect one of every five people in the United States. Unfortunately, nearly half of all diagnoses are missed,” said Senator Stabenow. “This legislation will provide direct federal support to better treat people with depression and bipolar disorders. It will save lives and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans.”

“I am happy to co-sponsor the Enhanced Act with my colleague, Senator Stabenow,” Senator George V. Voinovich said. “This legislation will bring attention and better coordination of research and treatment for depression and bipolar disorders - to improve the quality of life for our constituents.”

“Barriers to treatment pose an additional challenge for Americans suffering from depression,” said Senator Brown. “By building off the important work by Ohio’s University of Cincinnati, Lindner Center of HOPE, and other premier research institutions, this legislation would establish the first nationwide network of health centers specializing in treatment for depression. For individuals struggling with depressive and bipolar disorders, these treatment centers can offer more options and new hope.”

“When government fails to support research and treatment, it stigmatizes depression and takes us backwards to a time when those suffering with depression were told to stay silent,” said Senator Kerry. “I’m grateful for the work doctors and researchers are doing every day to provide early, effective treatment for depressive disorders and I’m honored to partner with Senator Stabenow to get them the support they deserve.”

More Americans suffer from depression, bipolar illness and other mood disorders than from coronary heart disease and cancer combined. With medication, psychotherapy, or combined treatment, most people with these disorders can be effectively treated and resume productive lives. Yet one-third of those suffering from depression—nearly five million Americans—do not receive treatment because they cannot afford it, don’t know where to go, or are afraid of societal

judgment. Depression also has a significant economic impact, estimated to cost the United States over \$83 billion annually due to reduced productivity, absenteeism, and mortality.

This legislation is based on efforts catalyzed by the University of Michigan Depression Center with 15 other leading academic medical centers across the nation. Joining together, these universities created a network of depression centers positioned to take academic research and translate it into practice, standardize diagnoses, treat early and more effectively, and prevent recurrences of depression and bipolar disorders.

The ENHANCED Act of 2009:

- ✓ Creates a national network with a pathway for developing and expanding up to 30 depression centers of excellence to increase access to the most appropriate and evidence-based depression care.
- ✓ Develops evidence-based treatment standards, clinical guidelines, and protocols to improve accurate and timely diagnosis of depression and bipolar disorders.
- ✓ Expands multidisciplinary, translational, and patient-oriented research by fostering the collaboration of academic and community-based service centers.
- ✓ Establishes a sustainable national resource for public and professional education and training, to advance knowledge and eradicate the stigma associated with depression and mood disorders.