



spotlight on health

Dealing With Depression

(NAPSA)—There could be good news for many of the 19 million Americans who suffer from depression each year. With proper treatment, patients can return to living a full and productive life.

“Depression is not a personality flaw, it is a serious medical illness that must be recognized and treated,” said Dr. Andrew Farah, medical director and chief of psychiatry at High Point Regional Health System in North Carolina.

Since depression is often misunderstood, being able to recognize symptoms is an essential first step to treating it. These symptoms include:

- Depressed or irritable mood most of the day—nearly every day
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities (such as hobbies, work, sex or being with friends) most of the day—nearly every day
- A sudden change in weight or appetite
- Inability to sleep or sleeping too much
- Agitation or restlessness
- Constant fatigue or loss of energy
- Frequent feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Frequent thoughts of death or suicide

Depression is caused by an imbalance of chemicals in the brain. There are a number of highly effective treatment options available to restore the balance of the chemical serotonin in the



Mental illness affects more than 54 million people a year. Fortunately, 80 percent of those who seek treatment will show improvement in symptoms.

brain, which is primarily responsible for mood.

The most common are a class of treatments called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors or SSRIs. One new SSRI, Lexapro, has been shown to be a well-tolerated and effective treatment for depression that may also improve anxiety symptoms associated with depression.

“Studies show that treatment with Lexapro can bring improvement in depression symptoms with fewer side effects and faster onset of action than other antidepressants, which is important in helping patients continue treatment,” Dr. Farah adds.

If you or a loved one experience symptoms of depression, see a doctor. You can find more information and take a simple self-screening test at www.lexapro.com.