



Depression and Bipolar  
Support Alliance

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**Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) hosts congressional briefing to discuss the importance of expanding peer support services.**

Chicago, IL – The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) today hosted a pair of congressional briefings, held in the House of Representatives in the morning and U.S. Senate in the afternoon, that spotlighted the role of peer support services in the care delivery system. The briefings, which were attended by several dozen congressional staff and stakeholders, were moderated by DBSA President Allen Doederlein and featured a distinguished list of expert presenters including:

- **Larry Davidson, Ph.D.**, Professor, Yale University Dept. of Psychiatry
- **Tom Lane**, Senior Director of Consumer and Recovery Services, Magellan Healthcare
- **Ronald Manderscheid**, Executive Director, National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
- **Olga Wuerz**, Certified Peer Support Specialist, Dallas VAMC
- **Lisa Goodale**, Vice President, Peer Support Services, DBSA

The use of peer support services has been shown to improve recovery and reduce the cost of care by decreasing inpatient and emergency room use. Already, the Veterans Administration has successfully incorporated peer support services into their care model. Today's congressional briefing brought to light these, and other important facts related to mental health peer support and the importance of prioritizing policies that support it.

“Our country is experiencing a crisis around the quality of mental healthcare for many of its citizens. And while there is much debate on the causes, we are not here today to enter that debate. But rather to be part of the solution,” explains DBSA President Allen Doederlein. “As an organization representing and speaking on behalf of people experiencing a mental health condition, DBSA can play a unique role as convener, and has a special perspective to share on recovery strategies.”

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The **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)** is the leading peer-directed national organization focusing on the two most prevalent mental health conditions, depression and bipolar disorder, which affect more than 21 million Americans, account for 90% of the nation's suicides every year, and cost \$23 billion in lost workdays and other workplace losses. DBSA's peer-based, wellness-oriented, and empowering services and resources are available when people need them, where they need them, and how they need to receive them—online 24/7, in local support groups, in audio and video casts, or in printed materials distributed by DBSA, our chapters, and mental health care facilities across America. Through more than 750 support groups and nearly 300 chapters, DBSA reaches millions of people each year with in-person and online peer support; current, readily understandable information about depression and bipolar disorder; and empowering tools focused on an integrated approach to wellness.

For more information, please visit [www.DBSAAlliance.org](http://www.DBSAAlliance.org) or call (800) 826-3632.