



News from the Office of
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

**Interim Mental Health Commissioner
Peter S. Curtis**

**Health Commissioner
Dr. Gale Burstein**

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October is National Depression Awareness Month

Screening, Treatment for Depression Widely Available

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) supports National Depression Awareness Month in Erie County. Depression is a serious illness that if left untreated can have serious impacts on individuals and their families. It affects both women and men; however, nearly 50 percent more women than men are living with depression, and postnatal depression affects one in five mothers.

“Depression continues to be a public health issue, under diagnosed and under treated” **said Interim Commissioner of Mental Health, Peter S. Curtis.** “The stigma that continues to surround depression and mental illness is a barrier to identification and treatment.”

“Suffering from depression is avoidable, and help is available for anyone who needs it. Depression is a true and treatable medical condition.” **said Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein.** “Erie County residents should try not to let hopelessness or shame stop them or a friend from getting medical help. There are numerous agencies and

Someone who is depressed has feelings of sadness or anxiety that last for weeks at a time. He or she may also experience:

- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism

- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not get better, even with treatment

People who suffer from depression or anxiety should seek help as early as possible. The earlier treatment begins, the more effective it is and the greater the likelihood of preventing recurrence. Parents should be aware that depression may begin during the adolescent years. If you or someone you know suffers from depression, help is available. Individuals suffering with depression are urged to contact their primary care physician or a behavioral health professional to get needed care. providers in our community that provide screening services and treatment for depression.”

For those that are uninsured, area Community Mental Health Centers not only have a sliding scale fee schedule, but they also assist in linking eligible individuals with programs such as Healthy New York or Child Health Plus. Not having insurance should not be a barrier to care!

The Erie County Department of Mental Health oversees mental health services for over 48,000 Erie County residents each month through contracts with 42 community based agencies, including the Erie County Medical Center and Erie County Departments of Senior Services, Social Services and Youth Services. The Department of Mental Health is administratively responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, and monitoring programs of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation involving mental health, mental retardation-developmental disabilities, problem gambling and, alcohol and substance abuse services.

For more information on depression and services available, visit:

The Erie County Department of Mental Health:

<http://www2.erie.gov/mentalhealth/>

The National Alliance on Mental Illness Buffalo and Erie County:

<http://www.namibuffalony.org/>

The Mental Health Association of Erie County:

<http://www.eriemha.org/>