



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Michael R. Bloomberg

Mayor

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.

Commissioner

nyc.gov/health

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Dear Healthcare Professional:

Depression is one of the most commonly seen conditions in primary care. One in 4 women and 1 in 10 men will suffer from a major depressive episode during their lifetime. Nearly 6%, or 380,000, of all adult New Yorkers each year report clinically significant emotional distress. Depressive disorders play an important role in the etiology, course and outcomes associated with chronic diseases, and if untreated, depression can lead to increased disability and suicide.

Primary care physicians and other non-psychiatrists can effectively screen for and manage depression. Between 5% and 10% of patients screened for depression will meet diagnostic criteria for a current episode of depression, more in certain high-risk populations.

Recognizing that primary care providers play a critical role in detecting depression, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is promoting the following:

- **Primary care physicians can effectively detect and manage depression;**
- **Routinely screen for depression using a simple 2-question tool (PHQ-2); and**
- **Depression can be treated. Medication and psychotherapy, alone or in combination, can help most patients.**

We hope you find the clinical tools, resources and patient education materials in this Action Kit useful. Your DOHMH representative is visiting you to discuss ways of applying these methods in your practice. Thank you for your dedication and contribution to the health of New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner
New York City Department of
Health and Mental Hygiene

Lloyd I. Sederer, M.D.
Executive Deputy Commissioner for Mental Hygiene
New York City Department of
Health and Mental Hygiene