



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

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Lloyd I. Sederer, M.D.
Executive Deputy Commissioner
Mental Hygiene Services

Dear Health Care Provider:

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene invites you to join our initiative promoting depression screening and management in primary care practice. As featured in the New York Times on April 13, 2005, the Division of Mental Hygiene is promoting depression screening in primary care practice using a simple self-administered tool—the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ9).

According to the most recent NYC Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (2004), 8% of adult New Yorkers have a diagnosis of major depression. Depression is one of the most common chronic conditions encountered in general medical practice; 6% to 9% of primary care patients have a treatable depressive disorder (AHRQ, 2002). Depressive disorders play an important role in the etiology, course and outcomes associated with chronic diseases, and when untreated, depression can lead to suicide.

Despite its high prevalence and substantial impact, detection and treatment of depression in the primary care setting continue to be less than what we all seek to achieve for our patients and their families. As a result of studies that support its benefits, the US Preventative Service Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screening adults for depression in clinical practices that have systems in place for accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and follow-up.

At this site you will find best practice guidelines for screening and managing depression in primary care practice, tools for screening and practice management, informative journal articles and links to helpful websites. My staff is available to assist with your implementation of depression screening and management. If you would like to contact us, please feel free to call the Depression Team at 212-219-5380.

I look forward to your participation in this vitally important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lloyd Sederer".

Lloyd Sederer, MD
Executive Deputy Commissioner for Mental Hygiene Services
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge R. Petit".

Jorge R. Petit, MD
Associate Commissioner, Bureau of Program Services
Division of Mental Hygiene