

# NCSP

National Council for Suicide Prevention

## Members

American Association  
of Suicidology (AAS)

American Foundation  
for Suicide Prevention  
(AFSP)

The Jason Foundation

The Jed Foundation

The Link's National  
Resource Center (NRC)  
for Suicide Prevention

National Organization  
for People of Color  
Against Suicide  
(NOPCAS)

Samaritans USA

Suicide Awareness  
Voices of Education  
(SAVE)

Suicide Prevention  
Action Network USA  
(SPAN USA)

Yellow Ribbon Suicide  
Prevention Program®

March 26, 2009

Yvette Waples, PharmD  
Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (HFD-21)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Ms. Waples:

The undersigned organizations are committed to preventing suicide through education, public awareness, research, crisis and support services and advocacy. The Advisory Committee process presents an opportunity for the NCSP to bring to people's attention the significant public health problem of suicide and attempted suicide by people who suffer from serious mental illnesses such as mood disorders, schizophrenia and substance abuse disorders. With over 32,000 deaths by suicide each year, suicide is a leading cause of premature death, years of potential life lost and tremendous economic and social impact on the citizens of this country.

Research shows that schizophrenia is a serious psychiatric disorder that affects up to 1% of the world's population. It is characterized by severe, but variable symptoms including delusions, hallucinations, disorganized and impeded speech or behavior, blunted or restricted mood expression, profound apathy and social withdrawal. This substantial social impairment often leads to a variety of social, educational, occupational and environmental stresses including among other things unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, and contact with law enforcement. Many may not know that schizophrenia is also associated with increased morbidity and mortality. People with schizophrenia have an estimated 2-3 fold increase in mortality compared to the general population. About 50% of patients with schizophrenia will attempt suicide and approximately 10% will die by suicide.

Patients suffering from schizophrenia who seek medication as part of a combined therapy and medical treatment regimen often move through various therapies, looking for improved efficacy as approximately 30% of patients are not satisfactorily responsive to currently available medications. While we are not supporting any particular medication or form of treatment for schizophrenia, we do support there being a wide range of treatment alternatives for those suffering with this debilitating and at times fatal disease.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Reidenberg, Psy.D., FAPA  
NCSP Managing Director, on behalf of:

AAS, AFSP, The Jason Foundation, The Jed Foundation, NOPCAS, Samaritans USA, SAVE, SPAN USA, YR