

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 19, 2005

CONTACT

Julie Totten

Phone: (781) 890-0220

pilot@familyaware.org

TEEN SUICIDE RATE HIGH MONITORING DEPRESSION TREATMENT URGENT

Organization Encourages Families to Use and Evaluate Parent/Teen Depression Wellness Guides

WALTHAM, MA – Many people don't realize that depression in teens is the leading cause of suicide. Now Families for Depression Awareness, a national nonprofit organization, has created wellness guides to help parents and teens monitor suicidal thinking and behavior.

Julie Totten, President of Families for Depression Awareness, cited the recent suicide of 18-year-old James Dungy, eldest son of coach Tony Dungy for the Indianapolis Colts. "Teen suicides are an everyday occurrence. We need to recognize depression and treat it before it leads to suicide. Our guides help families record suicidal thinking and behavior and know when to contact their clinician," said Totten.

The Depression Wellness Guides for parents and teens, now in their pilot stage, were created by Families for Depression Awareness, a nonprofit organization, dedicated to helping families recognize and cope with depressive disorders. The organization is inviting parents and their teens with depression to participate and obtain a copy of the guides by completing a remote telephone survey or attending a focus group in the Boston area to help fine-tune the resource before its nationwide release in upcoming months.

"We developed the guides in response to the 2004 Food and Drug Administration's warning on antidepressants that created a lot of confusion for parents," said Totten, "Parents need concrete information and tools to monitor their child and get the child well."

There are two guides; one designed for parents with children (or teens) diagnosed with depression and the other for teens with depression. These Guides are educational booklets with daily and weekly tools, including diaries and worksheets, to help parents and teens monitor treatment.

"The guides are the first of their kind, helping both parents and their children work together to monitor treatment and work towards recovery," said Totten. "It helps children taking medication, in talk therapy, or both."

Parents and teens can sign up for the pilot program by contacting pilot@familyaware.org or calling (781) 890-0220.

To arrange a media interview or get a copy of the guides, email pilot@familyaware.org, or call (781) 890-0220.

About Families for Depression Awareness

Families for Depression Awareness is a national nonprofit organization helping families recognize and cope with depressive disorders. The organization provides education, outreach, and advocacy to support families and is comprised of families who have lost a family member to suicide or have watched a loved one suffer with depression, with little knowledge about how to help. For more information please go to www.familyaware.org.

###