

# *Speak Up When You're Down*

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### ***This Mother's Day New Jersey Encourages Mothers to Speak Up When They Are Down***

TRENTON, N.J. – Mother's Day calls to mind images of flowers, greeting cards and Sunday brunches. But for mothers affected with postpartum depression (PPD) or other perinatal mood disorders (PMD), the holiday is far from joyful. In New Jersey, women have numerous resources available to them to overcome the effects of PMD, but first they must ask for help.

New Jersey has been on the forefront in developing resources to help women with PPD and other Perinatal Mood Disorders. Four years ago, New Jersey enacted the first law in the nation requiring all hospitals and birthing centers to screen new mothers for PPD. New Jersey is the only state in the nation to mandate this type of screening.

In 2005, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) launched a comprehensive public awareness campaign entitled *Speak Up When You're Down* to educate consumers and healthcare professional about PPD and other PMD.

Resources include an informational website, [www.njspeakup.gov](http://www.njspeakup.gov), which provides resources and written and video testimonials of women who suffered with PMD along with stories from partners and other family members. In addition, the 24/7 toll-free telephone helpline – 1-800-328-3838 – helps with general questions and information about treatment services, support groups and referrals to counseling.

Additionally, in an effort to educate New Jersey women about the signs and resources available for treating PMD, informational palm cards on the signs of PMD are being distributed throughout the state. Locations include hair and nail salons, spas, day care centers, nursery schools, restaurants and other retail locations.

PMDs can be serious, but they are treatable. Help is available, and it is important that a mother gets the support and treatment needed to recover from the effects of PMD so she can enjoy her baby.

Approximately 80 percent of new mothers experience at least a brief episode of the "baby blues" – feelings of sadness, anxiety, loneliness, or moodiness – within the first few days of giving birth. After a couple of weeks these symptoms typically disappear. However, when symptoms persist or deepen in intensity, they may be a sign of postpartum depression or another perinatal mood disorder. Perinatal mood disorders (PMD) include: anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorders and postpartum depression. The depression may be mild, moderate or severe.

Any woman who has recently had a baby, ended a pregnancy, or who has stopped breast-feeding, can be affected by PMD. The disorders usually occur within the first year after childbirth, miscarriage or stillbirth, but the signs of depression can also appear earlier – when a woman is pregnant, or even planning to be.

Talking about PPD and other perinatal mood disorders is the first step. If you or someone you know may be suffering from postpartum depression or other perinatal mood disorders, visit [www.njspeakup.gov](http://www.njspeakup.gov) or call 1-800-328-3838 for additional information and services.

PPD and other PMDs are highly treatable. There is no need for a woman to suffer alone with a Perinatal Mood Disorder during this remarkable period in her life.

- njspeakup.gov –