



NEWS RELEASE

Actor and Advocate Chyler Leigh and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Join Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health Initiative

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Leigh is speaking up for the first time about living with bipolar disorder to encourage people to seek help and advocate for their mental health

Be Vocal launches @bevocal.speakup Instagram and DIY expert tips to make social media mentally healthier

MARLBOROUGH, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Actor and advocate Chyler Leigh, who currently stars in CW's 'Supergirl,' is speaking out for the first time about living with bipolar disorder through her partnership with Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health, a multi-platform, multi-year mental health initiative.

"I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder when I was in my late 20s. Part of me was relieved to have a name for what I was experiencing. But I was also terrified of all of the unknowns. I didn't understand the diagnosis and was worried it would become my identity. It took me years to realize that the diagnosis doesn't define me," said Chyler Leigh. "I'm finally at a point in my life where I feel like I can speak my truth in my own way, on my own terms. Joining Be Vocal is my way of saying, 'OK. I'm ready to talk.' I know that there are millions of people who feel the same way. So let's do it together."

With Leigh at the forefront, Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health will advance its mission to change how mental health is portrayed and talked about through a new @bevocal.speakup Instagram presence, which will offer DIY expert tips on how to make social media mentally healthier for communities and individuals. Since 2015, Be Vocal, an initiative led by Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc. and leading advocacy organizations, has united the mental health community to combat the misrepresentation of mental illness and provide people with tools and resources to



advocate for themselves and their communities.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has also joined Be Vocal to amplify mental health experiences and maximize awareness efforts. “The responsible and appropriate portrayal of mental health conditions, on social media in particular, is so critical in enabling people to recognize when we need help and to seek it,” said **Christine Moutier, Chief Medical Officer of AFSP**. “We are proud to join Be Vocal to help people have real conversations about mental health and empower all of us to be vocal with friends and loved ones, at work, in our communities and when seeking care.”

- Visit www.BeVocalSpeakUp.com to learn more about Chyler Leigh’s story and why she’s speaking up for mental health.
- Follow [@bevocal.speakup](https://www.instagram.com/bevocal.speakup) on Instagram to join the movement to help make social media a mentally healthier place.
- Learn more about how to be vocal for yourself and your community, on social media, in the workplace and about mental health policy.

About Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health

Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health is a national initiative in partnership with Chyler Leigh, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, The Jed Foundation, Mental Health America, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the National Council for Behavioral Health and Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc. The initiative, created in 2015, is designed to empower people living with mental health conditions to speak up when talking with their support team and to encourage everyone to speak up as a community to advance mental health in America. Visit www.BeVocalSpeakUp.com.

About Chyler Leigh

Chyler Leigh is an actor, singer and advocate. Chyler’s aim is to empower others to feel confident in speaking up for themselves and loved ones, and to be a part of the movement to change society’s perceptions of mental health. She lives with bipolar disorder but is not defined by it.

About the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

AFSP is a voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death.

About the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

DBSA is the leading peer-directed national organization focused on creating wellness for people with mood disorders.

About The Jed Foundation (JED)

JED is a leading national non-profit organization that exists to promote emotional health and prevent suicide for our nation's teens and young adults.

About Mental Health America (MHA)

MHA is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit committed to promoting mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, and is guided by the Before Stage 4 philosophy that mental health conditions should be treated long before they reach the most critical points in the disease process.

About the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

About the National Council for Behavioral Health (The National Council)

The National Council is the unifying voice of America's community mental health and addictions treatment organizations.

About Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder affects approximately 12.6 million individuals in the United States and an estimated 29 million people worldwide.^{1,2} A person is usually diagnosed with bipolar disorder when they experience at least one manic episode, and the occurrence of both the manic and depressive episodes that are not better explained by another mental health condition, such as schizophrenia.³

Although each person's experience is unique, bipolar disorder is characterized by debilitating mood swings.⁴ While some people experience periods of stable mood and behavior after a period of abnormally excited or elevated mood, or mania, people with bipolar disorder usually experience at least one depressive episode, also known as bipolar depression.^{5,6} When individuals with bipolar disorder are experiencing symptoms, most tend to be depressed, rather than manic.⁴

Bipolar disorder can create significant losses in people's ability to function and enjoy life.⁷ It can affect personal and work relationships, create stress for the individual and their family, and reduce expected lifespan.^{6,8,9} Although research is ongoing, there is no single cause for bipolar disorder. In fact, there are many contributing factors including genetics and environmental factors.^{3,10} Diagnosis can be a long process and can take up to 10 years. It can take 15-20 years for those with alcohol or drug problems to be diagnosed properly.⁴ For many, the symptoms can be controlled.¹¹

About Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc. (Sunovion)

Sunovion is a global biopharmaceutical company focused on the innovative application of science and medicine to help people with serious medical conditions. Sunovion's vision is to lead the way to a healthier world. The company's spirit of innovation is driven by the conviction that scientific excellence paired with meaningful advocacy and relevant education can improve lives. With patients at the center of everything it does, Sunovion has charted new paths to life-transforming treatments that reflect ongoing investments in research and development and an unwavering commitment to support people with psychiatric, neurological and respiratory conditions.

Headquartered in Marlborough, Mass., Sunovion is an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Dainippon Pharma Co., Ltd. Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Europe Ltd., based in London, England, and Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc., based in Mississauga, Ontario, are wholly-owned direct subsidiaries of Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc. Additional information can be found on the company's websites: www.sunovion.com, www.sunovion.eu and www.sunovion.ca. Connect with Sunovion on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Sumitomo Dainippon Pharma Co., Ltd.

Sumitomo Dainippon Pharma is among the top-ten listed pharmaceutical companies in Japan, operating globally in major pharmaceutical markets, including Japan, the U.S., China and the European Union. Sumitomo Dainippon Pharma aims to create innovative pharmaceutical products in the Psychiatry & Neurology area, the Oncology area and Regenerative medicine/Cell therapy field, which have been designated as the focus therapeutic areas. Sumitomo Dainippon Pharma is based on the merger in 2005 between Dainippon Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., and Sumitomo Pharmaceuticals Co., Ltd. Today, Sumitomo Dainippon Pharma has more than 6,000 employees worldwide. Additional information about Sumitomo Dainippon Pharma is available through its corporate website at <https://www.ds-pharma.com>.

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