



IN VOLUME 25

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Left untreated, **DEPRESSION IS AS COSTLY AS HEART DISEASE OR AIDS** to the U.S. economy, costing more than \$43 billion in absenteeism from work, lost productivity and direct treatment costs<sup>5</sup>

**3% OF TOTAL SHORT-TERM DISABILITY DAYS** are due to depression<sup>6</sup>

**DEPRESSION ISN'T CAUSED BY** personal weakness, laziness or lack of willpower<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Mental Health, "Depression: A Treatable Illness," December, 2004

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, "World Health Report," 2001

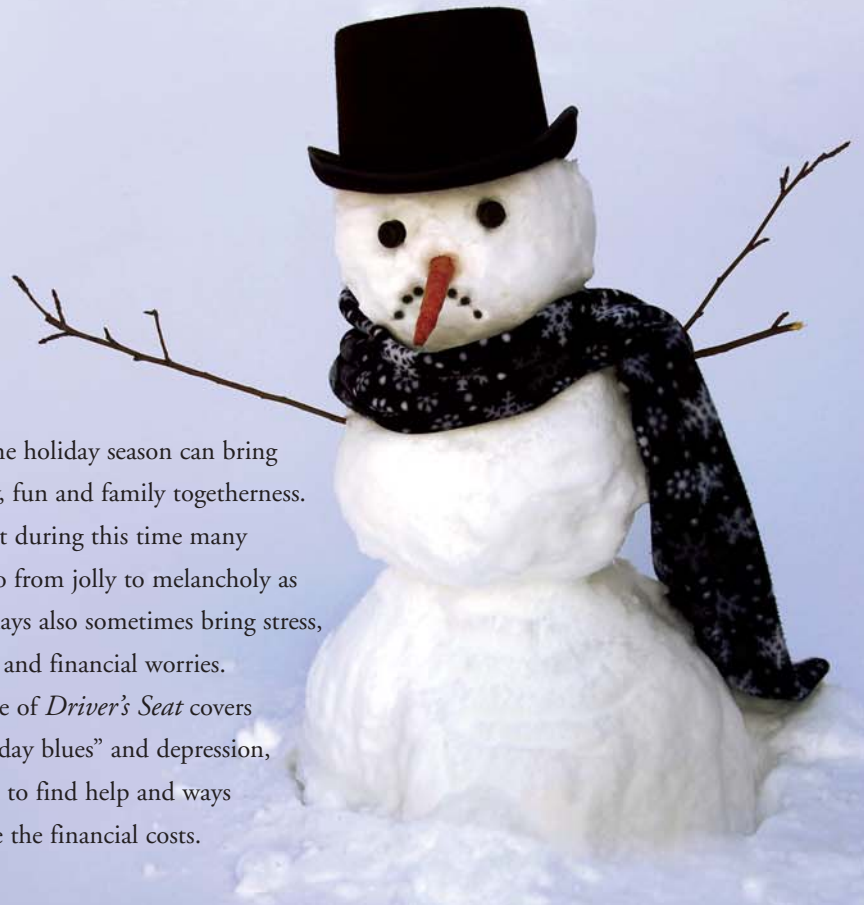
<sup>3</sup> National Institute of Mental Health, "Depression: What Every Woman Should Know," 1995

<sup>4</sup> National Institute of Mental Health, "Depression: A Treatable Illness," December, 2004

<sup>5</sup> Mental Health America, "Depression in the Workplace," November, 2006

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> American Academy of Family Physicians, "Depression: You Don't Have to Feel this Way," April, 2005



The holiday season can bring joy, fun and family togetherness. But during this time many people go from jolly to melancholy as the holidays also sometimes bring stress, tiredness and financial worries. This issue of *Driver's Seat* covers the "holiday blues" and depression, resources to find help and ways to reduce the financial costs.

## AN UNWANTED GIFT: "HOLIDAY BLUES"

Shopping, family demands and time- and money-management problems: These are some of the many things that can cause the "holiday blues." Instead of feeling happy, peaceful and cheerful, some people may feel sad, stressed and anxious. Some may unknowingly let those blues spiral into depression. It's important to know that these symptoms (as well as others) could be more than just the "holiday blues" – it could be clinical depression; a serious illness that needs immediate treatment.

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# TAKE OUR QUIZ

1 Depression is often accompanied by substance abuse and anxiety disorders

A. True B. False

2 Women suffer from depression more often than men

A. True B. False

3 Early treatment helps keep depression from getting worse or lasting a longer time

A. True B. False

Answers:

1. True<sup>9</sup>
2. True<sup>10</sup>
3. True<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Mental Health America, "Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)," March, 2007

<sup>9</sup> Archives of General Psychiatry, "Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication," June, 2005

<sup>10</sup> Journal of the American Medical Association, "The Epidemiology of Major Depressive Disorder: Results from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R)," June, 2003

<sup>11</sup> American Academy of Family Physicians, "Depression: You Don't Have to Feel this Way," April, 2005

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## GETTING HELP

Clinical depression affects more than 20 million Americans each year<sup>1</sup> and is the leading cause of disability in the United States and worldwide.<sup>2</sup> But it is treatable. If you or a family member might be suffering from depression, sign in to [MyGreatWest.com](http://MyGreatWest.com) click on *Find a Provider*, then select *Find a Great-West Healthcare Provider*. Click *Search by Medical Condition* and select *Depression*. You'll be given a list of medical

professionals who can help diagnose and treat depression. Fortunately, more than 80 percent of those suffering from depression show improvement when they get appropriate treatment.<sup>3</sup>

Medication isn't the only treatment for depression. Psychotherapies, or "talking" therapies, have proven to work for depression.<sup>4</sup> Discuss all the options with your doctor.

## FEELING SAD?

Seasonal Affective Disorder – or SAD – is a mood disorder associated with depression. It's a result of being exposed to less hours of sunlight as the days grow shorter in the winter. This can cause depression-like symptoms that disappear during spring and summer. SAD affects half a million people every winter, peaking in December, January and February.<sup>5</sup> If you think you may be suffering from SAD, visit your primary care physician, who can diagnose it and create a treatment plan.



## THE GIFT OF HELP



The high cost of medications to treat depression can be, well, depressing. But there is free, knowledgeable help available. (Be sure to visit your physician to discuss all treatment options.)

- Mental Health America 1-800-273-TALK
- National Depressive and Manic Depressive Association 1-800-82-NDMDA
- National Alliance on Mental Illness 1-800-950-NAMI
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance 1-800-826-3632
- The National Institute of Mental Health 1-800-421-4211



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