

FDA

For January 26, 2007 Neurological Devices Panel Meeting

Attn: Janet L. Scudiero

Executive Secretary of the Neurological Device Panel

Dear Sir

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is the only national not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research and education and by reaching out to people with mood disorders and those affected by suicide.

Nineteen million Americans suffer from depression each year. Without treatment it causes pain and suffering and has a significant medical morbidity and mortality. Even with all the available treatments, about 15% of depressives kill themselves. In the United States, suicide is the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death. In 2004, the suicide rate was 11/100,000 which greatly exceeds the rate of people who die by homicide or from AIDS. Among teenagers, it is the third leading cause of death, among college student, the second leading cause of death and among men ages 18-65, the fourth leading cause of death. Despite an array of treatments, these figures have been stable for at least 10 years, although there is some indication that with the black box warning on antidepressants, the suicide rate for teenagers and young adults is rising. More than 90% of those who die by suicide have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder and about 60% of them have a depressive disorder. Major Depression is considered by the WHO to be the 4<sup>th</sup> most disabling clinical condition worldwide.

It is clear that we still need more options for treatment of this disorder. Therefore, our Foundation commends the effort to develop and test the efficacy of new treatments for major depression.

Sincerely,

Paula J. Clayton MD

Medical Director

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

New York, New York