

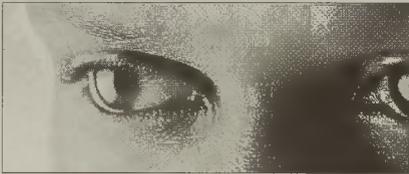
Living with bipolar disorder

Continued from page 1B

mania in and of itself remains deadly because it can lead to psychosis and instability.

They say that what goes up must come down, and the same thing is true for mood swings in a patient with bipolar disorder: mania inevitably crashes into depression. Briefly, to review information presented in our previous mental health article, depression involves feelings of intense sadness, worthlessness, and hopelessness. The prosperous future one (perhaps erroneously) perceived during a manic state suddenly seems light years away and feelings of helplessness and desperation replace any hint of optimism one might have felt. The high-energy rush of mania gives way to a slow, sluggish state of fatigue and pessimism. Simply making it through each day becomes a struggle that seems almost insurmountable. People living with depression may also experience suicidal ideation—that is, thinking about or planning to end their lives. Unfortunately, many people also act on that idea.

Bipolar disorder has a handful of sub-types, so the exact range and duration of mood swings and symptoms experienced will vary from individual to individual. The easiest way to think about bipolar disorder is to consider a continuum, with extreme mania on one side and



PHOTO/WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

Many bipolar episodes can be controlled with medicines, but the mistake many patients make is thinking they are healed, stop taking their medications, and the episodes start all over again.

extreme depression on the other. Because the disease can manifest in different ways, it is important that a patient with bipolar disorder is completely open and honest with his or her doctor regarding disease symptoms; successful treatment depends largely on getting the diagnosis correct.

What treatment is available for bipolar disorder?

Although there is no cure for bipolar disorder, treatment options continue to advance. Briefly, the most critical component of treatment for the illness is pharmacotherapy, or the use of prescription medications that target neurotransmitters, the chemicals in the brain that conduct electrical signals. Usually, a variety (or cocktail) of medicines is prescribed; these drugs may include antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and antipsychotics. Adjunct treatments like psychotherapy and fish oil may also prove useful. We will dis-

uss treatment for mood disorders in detail in our next mental health column.

The most important fact to keep in mind when living with bipolar disorder is that it is crucial to take one's medications exactly as prescribed and not to stop taking them without first talking to a doctor. Studies have shown that, for people who stopped adhering to their bipolar medication regimens, 80% will relapse within one year, and 90 percent will relapse within two years. These numbers are staggering compared to the 20 percent of people who will relapse if they stay on medications.

Remember, knowledge is power, but it is what you do with it that makes all the difference.

Contribution by Jaimie Hunter, MPH

For more information about the Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health, visit at www.wfubmc.edu/minorityhealth. Or, for health information call (336) 713.7578.

704 376 0496
Is the number to your best source of community news.
The Charlotte Post

BOOKS-A-MILLION Presents
OMAR TYREE



SATURDAY
JULY 29TH
7PM

C NC MILLS • 704.979.8300

Books-A-Million presents New York Times bestselling author Omar Tyree signing his new book *What They Want* at the Concord Mills Books-A-Million.

Line numbers will be distributed beginning at 10AM the day of the event.

BOOKS-A-MILLION Author Signing Series

Your Life,
Your Paper,
Your Post



Dudley's

Beauty College, Charlotte
Extends Heartfelt Gratitude to Our...

Students, Staff and Alumni

for their outstanding participation in the
"Ms Teen African-American Scholarship Pageant
and Development Program"

Saturday, July 22, 2006

As Always,

You've Make Us Extremely Proud!

1950 Bishop Madison Lane, Charlotte, NC 28216
704-392-2565

ABC

Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.

Super Weekend: Taking Steps Toward Better Health

**Call To Action To All Charlotte Residents:
Come And Find Out Your Risk
Of Heart Disease And Stroke.**

FREE

Heart Health Information
and Screenings

Health Seminars Blood Pressure Checks

Glucose Screenings Cholesterol Screenings

Physician Consultations Body Mass Index and Weight

Also available: Interactive Fitness Demonstrations, Cooking Demonstrations, Medical Insurance Information and Children's Activities

Win door prizes including Flat Screen TVs, DVD players and other electronics

**Saturday, July 29, 2006
10:00 am - 6:00 pm**

Eastland Mall
5471 Central Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28212

(Free Parking and Refreshments Available)
Call 704-588-1263 for more information

"Super Weekend: Taking Steps Toward Better Health" is sponsored by ABC/ABC

Presbyterian HOSPITAL MINT HILL

Remarkable People. Remarkable Medicine.

Mint Hill Profile

Quality Schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Police Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer Firefighters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Thriving Business Park	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shopping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strong Sense of Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>

Presbyterian Healthcare would like to add to the list of qualities that make the Mint Hill area a great place to live. Since 1903, our physicians and staff have provided this region with the latest preventive, diagnostic and treatment options. With your help, we can bring our century's worth of award-winning, remarkable care to where you need it most – close to home.

Services

- 50 acute care beds
- Intensive care unit
- Surgical operating rooms
- LDRP maternity rooms
- Emergency department
- Diagnostic cardiac services

- Laboratory and pharmacy services
- Imaging services such as CT scanner, fluoroscopy, ultrasound, X-ray and mobile MRI

Amenities

- On-call dining for patients and families
- Flat-screen TVs in every patient room
- Free movies and Internet access
- Patient-driven, compassionate staff
- Instant-access nurse calling system
- Safety motion sensor lights

Proposed Location: The intersection of I-485 North and Albemarle Road

Want your own hospital?

Here's how you can help:

Write a letter explaining why you would like Presbyterian to build a community hospital in the Mint Hill area and send it to: My Mint Hill Hospital, c/o Presbyterian Hospital, P.O. Box 33549, Charlotte, NC 28233.

Or, you can submit a letter online at www.myminthillhospital.org

We will forward all letters to the NC Division of Facility Services.