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For Immediate Release Press Release

Eating Disorders Legislative Champion Senator Shelley Moore Capito Tours the West Virginia University Disordered Eating Center of Charleston during National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

The original leader of the Anna Westin Act of 2015 (S. 1865), Senator Shelley Moore Capito [R -WV], visits a treatment center in West Virginia, WVU Disordered Eating Center of Charleston, during National Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

Charleston, W. Va.- February 22, 2016- Over 30 million Americans experience an eating disorder during their lifetime, however, only one in ten will receive treatment for their disorder often due to stigma, a shortage of early identification and intervention, and lack of access to treatment. In West Virginia alone, over 60,000 are currently suffering from eating disorders that we know of. That's why the Eating Disorders Coalition (EDC) and West Virginia University (WVU) partnered together to host Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) on a visit to their treatment center - WVU Disordered Eating Center of Charleston.

Senator Capito is a strong supporter of eating disorders issues on the federal level, leading the introduction of the only bipartisan, bicameral eating disorders-specific legislation in history- The Anna Westin Act of 2015 (S. 1865). Senator Capito, along with three other women Senators- Senator Amy Klobuchar [D-MN], Senator Kelly Ayotte [R-NH], and Senator Tammy Baldwin [D-WI], introduced the Anna Westin Act of 2015 this past summer. The Anna Westin Act, if passed and signed into law, would do two things without adding a cost to the federal government: (1) provide trainings to health professionals and school personnel to identify the early warning signs of an eating disorder and how to intervene, and (2) clarify existing law to ensure families and

individuals are able to receive full health insurance coverage for their eating disorder treatment, including intermediate level residential treatment.

“Millions of people are impacted by eating disorders, but only one in 10 people receive the treatment they need. Facilities like the West Virginia University Disordered Eating Center of Charleston play a critical role in combating this statistic by providing access to treatment and enhancing awareness and prevention. I was glad to get an up-close look at the important work being done here, and I will continue working with my colleagues to advance the *Anna Westin Act* and other legislation to help individuals struggling with eating disorders receive the treatment they need,” said Senator Capito.

In the House of Representatives, the counterpart bill (H.R. 2515) to the Senate Anna Westin Act has been co-sponsored by every West Virginia Congressman including Congressman McKinley [R-WV-1], Congressman Alex Mooney [R-WV-2], and Congressman Evan Jenkins [R-WV-3].

“We could not be more thrilled and proud of our elected officials in West Virginia”, said Dr. Jessica Luzier, Clinical Director of the WVU-DECC. “We have an opportunity to make some real change with this legislation, and to help so many in our state who are struggling with these deadly disorders”.

“Senator Capito has been a true champion for people with eating disorders during the 114th Congress, to such an extent that the Eating Disorders Coalition awarded her a ‘Champion of Eating Disorders’ award back in October”, said Katrina Velasquez, Esq., Policy Director of the Eating Disorders Coalition. “What is really refreshing about her commitment to eating disorders and women’s issues is that she has a drive to really get things done in Congress, which has led to her working across the aisle on a number of occasions including on the Anna Westin Act. We really couldn’t ask for a better champion.”

The visit coincides with National Eating Disorder Awareness week, which runs during the last week of February every year. The goal of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week is to put the spotlight on the seriousness of eating disorders and to improve public understanding of their causes, triggers and treatments.

West Virginia University Disordered Eating Center of Charleston is an interdisciplinary, outpatient treatment center that provides evidence-based interventions to children and adults who struggle with eating disorders. The WVU-DECC conducts meaningful outcomes research and provides outreach to hundreds of providers across the state in an effort to improve prevention, access, and treatments offered to families. For more information contact Dr. Jessica Luzier at West Virginia University at (304) 388-1000. Additional resources can also be found at <http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/decc>.

The Eating Disorders Coalition is a Washington, D.C.-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of treatment providers, advocacy organizations and entities, parents of children with eating disorders, and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. For more information contact Katrina Velasquez at the Eating Disorders Coalition at kvelasquez@eatingdisorderscoalition.org. Additional resources can also be found at www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org.

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