

# Facts About Eating Disorders: What The Research Shows

## *Eating Disorders Affect Millions of Americans:*

- At least 30 million Americans suffer from an eating disorder in their lifetime.<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Eating disorders are the 3<sup>rd</sup> most common chronic illness among adolescent females.<sup>3</sup>
- Eating disorders do not discriminate: male and female, young and old, all economic classes and race/ethnicities are affected.<sup>1</sup>
  - 0.9% of American women suffer from anorexia in their lifetime.
  - 1.5% of American women suffer from bulimia nervosa in their lifetime.
  - 2.8% of American adults suffer from binge eating disorder in their lifetime.
- Eating disorders affect large numbers of US military personnel.<sup>4</sup>
  - In a study following active duty military personnel over time, 5.5% of women and 4% of men had an eating disorder at the beginning of the study, and within just a few years of continued service, 3.3% more women and 2.6% more men developed an eating disorder.

## *Eating Disorders Are Dangerous:*

- Every 62 minutes at least one person dies as a direct result from an eating disorder.<sup>5</sup>
- Anorexia has the highest mortality rate of all mental disorders, with a mortality rate of 5% per decade. Young people ages 15-24 years with anorexia have 10 times the risk of dying compared to their same-age peers.<sup>6,7</sup>

## *Eating Disorders Are Treatable:*

- Eating disorders can be successfully and fully treated; unfortunately only about a third of people with an eating disorder ever receive treatment.<sup>1</sup>
- Among adolescents with an eating disorder, fewer than 1 in 5 have received treatment.<sup>8</sup>

## *Insurance Does Not Adequately Cover Eating Disorder Treatment:*

- According to a survey of 109 specialists, representing nearly every inpatient eating disorders program in the United States:<sup>9</sup>
  - 1 in 5 eating disorder specialists believe that insurance companies are indirectly responsible for the death of at least one of their patients.
  - 96.7% of eating disorder specialists believe their patients with anorexia nervosa are put in life threatening situations because of health insurance companies' refusal to cover treatment.
- TRICARE provides healthcare coverage for over 9.5 million active duty service members and their families.<sup>10</sup>
  - Unfortunately, TRICARE restricts access to needed treatment, denying coverage of treatment from freestanding eating disorder centers.

## References

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