



Johanna Kandel, Founder and CEO of The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness and Board Member of the Eating Disorders Coalition, Appointed to the Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee (ISMICC)

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA/WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 7, 2020) – Johanna Kandel, Founder and CEO of The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness and Board Member of the Eating Disorders Coalition (EDC), has joined the Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee (ISMICC) to represent people with lived experience. The ISMICC was established by the [21st Century Cures Act](#) to improve federal coordination of efforts that address the pressing needs of adults with serious mental illness and children and youth with serious emotional disturbance.

The ISMICC is composed of senior leaders from ten federal agencies including the United States Department of Health & Human Services, the Departments of Justice, Labor, Veteran Affairs, Defense, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Labor and the Social Security Administration, along with 14 non-federal public members. ISMICC’s non-federal membership represents mental health researchers, providers, patients, families, judges, law enforcement officers, and other professionals who work with people living with Serious Mental Illness (SMI). HHS Secretary, Alex M. Azar II, and Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Mental Health and Substance Use, Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, are responsible for naming advisory members.

Kandel is a longtime advocate for eating disorders initiatives, both with the Eating Disorders Coalition and in her two-decade career leading The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness, a premier non-profit organization offering free, weekly, therapist-led support groups nationwide, as well as education and low-cost outpatient care for underserved individuals experiencing eating disorders. As a key public service, The Alliance also offers the resource [findedhelp.com](#), the most robust clinical provider database in the field of eating disorders. This site directs people to specialized eating disorder care around the country, in an advertisement-free space.

Kandel is an impassioned and effective champion for eating disorders awareness, harnessing her own lived experience with eating disorders, and a potent breadth of expertise regarding access to best-practice care. Kandel is uniquely poised to bring attention to eating disorders concerns through ISMICC, representing yet another important step in The Alliance and EDC’s shared goal—encouraging the federal government to make eating disorders a public health priority in the United States. Further, this allows for greater attention to the profound impact of eating disorders on individuals, care systems, and upon society at large.

“I am extremely honored to have been appointed by Secretary Azar and Assistant Secretary McCance-Katz to ISMICC,” notes Johanna Kandel. “Through this opportunity, I am humbled to represent the 29 million Americans in the United States who will experience an eating disorder in their lifetime. I am so proud of the work that we did, alongside the Eating Disorders Coalition, to help pass the 21st Century Cures Act, which called for the formation of ISMICC. As someone that experienced serious mental illness, I am so grateful to have a seat at this important table, and hope to help create change surrounding visibility, access, and education for eating disorders and serious mental illness.”

“We at the Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action are thrilled to have a vital member of our community appointed to the Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee,” said EDC Board President Chase Bannister, MDIV, MSW, LCSW, CEDS. “With her extensive experience in the eating disorders field as a survivor, advocate, and leader, Johanna is certain to use her voice to ensure eating disorders become a top issue for this impactful committee.”

The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the outreach, education, early intervention, support, and advocacy for all eating disorders. Since its founding in October 2000, The Alliance has worked tirelessly to raise awareness; eliminate secrecy and stigma; promote access to care; and support those susceptible to, currently experiencing, and recovering from eating disorders. The Alliance offers educational presentations to schools, healthcare providers, and community agencies; free, weekly, therapist-led support groups (in-person and virtually) nationwide for those experiencing eating disorders and for their loved ones; support and referrals through both a free help-line and comprehensive referral website www.findEDhelp.com; low-cost, life-saving outpatient to underinsured and uninsured adults in our community; unique and empowering scale smashing events and SmashTALK panel discussions; and advocacy for eating disorders and mental health. For more information, please visit www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com.

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, DC-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can also be found at eatingdisorderscoalition.org.

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