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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the proposed documentary on mood disorder that Nathan Friedkin is developing. For the past three years I have led a support group for friends and family members of persons with bipolar or major depression through the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance in San Francisco (DBSA-SF). In these meetings it is clear that education and information are critical resources for coping with the difficult periods revolving around these disorders. Frequently it is the experiences of peers that are the most helpful to family members caught in the midst of a crisis or dealing with an extended period of lack of progress. A film designed to address common concerns and dilemmas will be a valuable resource. In addition, stigma remains a major barrier for persons with mental illness and for their families. The documentary film proposed by Mr. Friedkin will also be valuable by addressing some of the misconceptions that nourish stigma.

Beyond this direct experience with family members, I have been involved as a psychiatric nurse and nurse educator throughout my career. Untreated patients may be lost to suicide or family abandonment, often leading to a life on the streets with exposure to drugs and alcohol as coping tools. In contrast, effectively treated patients can successfully complete college degrees, find their places in the work force, and lead productive lives provided that they have helpful support to promote compliance with treatment and assistance during episodes that may occur.

In my experience with Mr. Friedkin through the group that he attended and in my subsequent review of his written materials I see no reason why he would not be able to execute the project and accomplish the goals he has set out in writing. He has a clear understanding of what can be helpful and supportive for friends and families.

I strongly urge your support of this valuable project.

Sincerely,

Jane S. Norbeck, RN, DNSc  
Professor and Dean Emeritus

