

TRUTHINDRUGS

Restoring a Safe & Effective Mental Health System

April 28, 2011

Ms. Elizabeth Casey
Executive Vice President, Standards & Practices
Twentieth Century Fox Television
10201 West Pico Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90035

Via Facsimile: 310-369-8726

Dear Ms. Casey,

We are outraged that during the April 26 episode of *Glee, Born this Way*, a school counselor who was depicted as “depressed” was provided a prescription drug as the first line treatment for a mental health issue.

The episode equated providing insulin for a proven diabetic with prescribing a psychotropic medication for someone with a mental health concern that was not properly diagnosed. The message delivered to millions of Americans, including teens, that taking prescription drugs will lead to instant happiness is wrong and dangerous.

A significant body of research indicates that antidepressant medications, particularly the one depicted in the story, have not been proven effective. There no suggestion in *Glee* of the more appropriate first step: proper diagnosis by doctoral-level professionals who are specifically trained in assessing and treating mental disorders.

Numerous harmful side effects have been identified with psychotropic medications, which are the number one selling class of prescription drugs in the United States. Therapy, not drugs, is often the most appropriate treatment. Yet in the episode, a psychotropic medication, and not a proper diagnosis from a doctoral-level behavioral health professional, was the first-line treatment in the episode.

Millions of American teens and adults look to *Glee* for inspiration. As America’s top-rated entertainment series among teens and a Top 3 series for adults, it’s simply wrong for Twentieth Century Fox to foster the proliferation of psychotropic medications, many of which have proven costly, ineffective and even harmful to children and adults.

We request that Fox issue a public statement affirming that an appropriate diagnosis by a doctoral-level mental health specialist is the critical first step in treating depression and other mental health concerns. Because *Glee* is top-rated among teens, we ask that our *Parents’ Guide to Mental Health* be made available on Fox web sites featuring *Glee*. Finally, we request that *Glee* attempt to undo the damage done with a future story line that will inspire teens, parents and other adults to remember that drugs are not an instant solution and should not be the first-line treatment for mental disorders.

We appreciate your attention and response to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

John Caccavale, Ph.D.
Executive Director
National Alliance of Professional Psychology Providers

Cc: Chris Alexander, Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications