



SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION NETWORK USA
Opening Minds. Changing Policy. Saving Lives.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPAN USA Commends VW for Pulling “Jumper” Ad

VW demonstrates sensitivity to serious public health problem

Washington, D.C. (February 15, 2007) – Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN USA) today praised Volkswagen of America for its decision to remove the television advertisement “Jumper” from the airwaves in response to expressions of concern from SPAN USA and other advocacy organizations.

“While our current campaign is all about the optimism inherent to the Volkswagen brand, sensitivity is also a key element,” said Keith Price public relations manager for Volkswagen of America. “With that sensitivity in mind, we have withdrawn the ‘jumper’ television spot.”

“SPAN USA commends Volkswagen of America for its swift response to concerns raised about its ad portraying a suicidal man,” said Jerry Reed, executive director of SPAN USA, the nation’s leading grassroots advocacy organization working to advance public policies that prevent suicide. “Suicide is a serious public health problem and we appreciate VW’s willingness to listen to and address our concerns regarding the ad. Working together, we can reduce stigma and encourage those at risk to seek the help they need. It takes leaders in all sectors to reduce the public health problem of suicide. VW today showed that they are one of those leaders.”

More than 31,000 people die by suicide each year in the United States and approximately 1.8 million attempt suicide. In contrast, fewer than 20,000 die by homicide or from HIV/AIDS. Two-thirds of those who die by suicide are not receiving treatment at the time of their death.

Suicides cost the U.S. \$13 billion in lost earnings each year, and suicide attempts requiring hospitalization cost the United States \$3.8 billion per year. The emotional costs to countless families and communities are incalculable.

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SPAN USA is the nation’s only suicide prevention organization dedicated to leveraging grassroots support among suicide survivors and others to advance public policies that prevent suicide. Since its founding in 1996, SPAN USA has led the drive to make suicide a public health priority by building political will and calling for the development and implementation of a national strategy for suicide prevention. Using its extensive grassroots network of survivors and advocates, SPAN USA has actively promoted the cause on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures. For more information, please visit www.spanusa.org.