

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Award-Winning Country Musician to Tour Montana

Jason DeShaw to Share Story of Recovery, Songs of Hope

HELENA — There is hope and there is help.

That's the message that national award-winning mental health speaker and accomplished country musician Jason DeShaw will impart during a 10-city Montana tour this spring.

Presented by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana and the Center for Mental Health Research and Recovery at Montana State University in Bozeman, the "Serenity in the Storm" tour opens April 14 in Butte and, after stops all across Montana, culminates May 7 in Missoula. Many of the performances are in middle and high schools and all are free and open to the public.

DeShaw will present in Butte, Great Falls, Havre, Glasgow, Sidney, Miles City, Billings, Helena, Bozeman and Missoula.

"Jason is a beacon of light in the dark world of mental illness," said John Doran, director of public relations at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana. "Mental illness and suicide are all too real in Montana and there is no better message of hope than from Jason. This tour can make a real difference in preventing tragedy and breaking the stigma of mental illness."

DeShaw, 33, grew up on the Hi-Line and his music resonates with Montana's rural way of life. For the past decade, DeShaw has toured across 35 states, Canada and Europe singing his original country music. In 2010, he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and alcoholism. Since then he has advocated for mental health and addiction recovery as both a speaker and a singer. His presentation combines his story of recovery with original songs of hope.

In 2014, DeShaw received the Champions Award in Washington, D.C., from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), recognizing an individual with a mental illness who reduces stigma by "exhibiting courage, leadership and service on behalf of all people living with mental illness."

"Jason has an incredible musical gift that he combines with a powerful message of hope for

personal recovery from mental illness and a broad victory over mental illness stigma,” said Matt Kuntz, executive director of the Montana chapter of NAMI, which is also supporting the tour.

Mental illness and addiction are an epidemic in Montana. Many people face their struggles alone, afraid to speak to others about their experiences. Open communication can have a positive effect on reducing the stigma and encouraging individuals who are not in good mental health to seek help.

DeShaw’s authenticity gives people permission to feel and acknowledge those who struggle with mental illness as valued members of society.

“My goal is to reach out to others who are looking for help and give them hope,” DeShaw said. “I’m excited at the potential this tour holds for broadening my message to a larger Montana audience.”

For more information, contact Joy Novota at [\(406\) 317-2270](tel:4063172270) or at joyofmontana@gmail.com. For tour updates, go to www.facebook.com/jasondeshaw or www.jasondeshaw.com.

About the Tour:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana and the Center for Mental Health Research and Recovery at MSU present “Serenity in the Storm,” a 10-city Montana tour by award-winning mental health speaker and accomplished country musician Jason DeShaw.

Tour Dates:

April 14 – Butte

7 p.m., Butte High School Auditorium, 401 South Wyoming St.

April 16 – Great Falls

7 p.m., Bill Will Auditorium at Charles M. Russell High School, 228 17th Ave. NW

April 21 – Havre

7 p.m., Havre High School Auditorium, 900 18th St.

April 23 – Glasgow

7 p.m., Glasgow High School Auditorium, 1 Scotty Pride Drive

April 28 – Sidney

7 p.m., Sidney Middle School Auditorium, 415 South Central Ave.

April 29 – Miles City

6:30 p.m., Custer County High School Auditorium, 20 South Center Ave.

May 1 – Billings

7 p.m., Billings West High School Auditorium, 2201 St Johns Ave.

May 4 – Helena

7 p.m., Helena Middle School Auditorium, 1025 North Rodney St.

May 6 – Bozeman

7 p.m., Emerson’s Crawford Theater, 111 South Grand Ave.

May 7 – Missoula

7 p.m., University of Montana Dennison Theatre, 32 Campus Drive