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Contact:
Ifdy Perez, COPD Foundation
Email: iperez@copdfoundation.org
Tel: 1-866-731-2673, ext. 398

New Report Shows COPD Affects Younger Generations, National Concern that Impacts All Americans

Washington, D.C. (November 18th, 2009)—A new report, *COPD Uncovered*, released today, is bringing to light new information about the state of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in the global arena. The report reveals that a younger group of individuals (between the ages of 40 and 65) living with COPD has emerged¹. Many of these individuals are working people and important wage earners in our society^{2,3}.

The COPD Foundation collaborated with other organizations worldwide in the development of this report which calls unto policymakers to address this growing problem. COPD affects 210 million people worldwide and is expected to be the third leading cause of death in ten years⁴. The report found that individuals between 40 and 65 with COPD miss as many as ten hours of work per week because of their COPD⁵.

“COPD is ‘not your grandfather’s disease’ anymore,” says Dr. Byron Thomashow, Medical Director of New York Presbyterian Hospital and Chairman of the COPD Foundation Board. “COPD has always carried a stigma that it’s an old person’s disease but data has been proving otherwise. It’s affecting younger people.”

“We expect that this report will open the eyes of our nation’s legislators and public officials,” says John Walsh, President of the COPD Foundation. “This report will enhance awareness about individuals living with COPD including those who are undiagnosed, and focus on diagnosis, treatment and management, and prevention.”

The goal of the Foundation’s grassroots initiative is to extend the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute’s public awareness campaign, *COPD Learn More Breathe Better*[®], into other federal agencies. The initiative, driven by individuals living with COPD and their families, began by targeting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure accurate data collection on COPD, which is critical to developing and establishing public policy priorities including the introduction of legislation in Congress.

“The *COPD Uncovered* report is a call-to-action establishing that this is a global burden that not only affects those living with COPD but also families, health care professionals, policymakers and the public at large,” says Walsh.

Additional facts from the report:

- The cost of COPD exceeds that of many other serious, long-term conditions including asthma and diabetes⁷. The worldwide burden of COPD is nearly double that of diabetes and it causes more deaths⁶.
- Though the primary cause of COPD is cigarette smoke⁸ and smoking cessation is an important part of COPD management, many former smokers develop symptoms and are diagnosed a decade or two after they stopped. In fact, even if all smoking stopped today, the effect on COPD statistics would not be seen for up to 20 years⁹.
- COPD puts pressure on healthcare systems. One in six European and U.S. patients had visited the ER or hospital in a six month period 2006-2007⁵. Additionally, a large majority of COPD patients suffer from co-morbidities, such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes¹⁰⁻¹³. Studies show that 40 percent suffer from heart disease¹⁰ and as many as 42 percent from high blood pressure^{12,13}.
- More women than men are now being diagnosed with COPD¹⁴ – a patient segment central to family care.

About COPD

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a debilitating, life-threatening and progressive lung disease that interferes with normal breathing⁸. It is thought to cause around three million deaths per year—on average one person every 10 seconds⁴. COPD refers to emphysema and chronic bronchitis—two commonly co-existing diseases of the lung. Due to lung deterioration, people with COPD experience symptoms like chronic shortness of breath and cough that impact the ability to lead an active and productive life⁸. There is no cure for COPD but it can be treated.

About COPD Uncovered

COPD Uncovered represents the combined efforts of a multi-disciplinary committee of international experts, coming together to bring forward some of the most burning issues in COPD today. Their aim is to highlight the impact of COPD in an understudied and ignored patient segment between the ages of 40 and 65.

The *COPD Uncovered* initiative is a compendium of research and analysis undertaken by experts in respiratory health. This initiative is sponsored by Novartis Pharma AG and is administered by a Secretariat from Chandler Chicco Companies (CCC). The studies underlying the *COPD Uncovered* Report were commissioned by Novartis Pharma AG.

Following the release of this report, the *COPD Uncovered* team is conducting further quantitative research into the direct and indirect costs of the disease among this age group. In 2010, the team expects to release the results of the study that will look at the specific impact of COPD on the daily lives of more than 2,000 COPD patients aged 45–67 from the U.S., the UK, Germany, Brazil, China and Turkey.

About the Authors

The *COPD Uncovered* report, issued on World COPD Day 2009, is authored by the following individuals, supported by Novartis with editorial assistance from medical education specialists from CCC:

- Monica Fletcher, Chief Executive, Education for Health and National Respiratory Training Center, principle lead for *COPD Uncovered*
- Dr Marianella Salapatras, President, European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations
- Professor Thys van der Molen, Department of General Practice, University of Groningen
- John W. Walsh, President, COPD Foundation

About the COPD Foundation

The COPD Foundation is dedicated to developing and supporting programs which improve the quality of life through research, education, early diagnosis, and enhanced therapy for persons whose lives are impacted by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The COPD Foundation has several programs dedicated to informing, empowering, educating, and engaging individuals affected by COPD, including both diagnosed and undiagnosed individuals, their families and friends, and their medical professionals. For more information, please visit: <http://www.copdfoundation.org>.

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