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## **COPD Foundation Commends Congress for Recognizing the Importance of COPD During Awareness Month**

**WASHINGTON, DC (November 19, 2009)**—A COPD resolution introduced into the House of Representatives and a letter addressed to its members are two big steps set in motion by the co-chairs of the Congressional COPD Caucus this month in recognition and support of November COPD Awareness Month.

Senators Blanche Lincoln and Mike Crapo and Representatives John Lewis and Cliff Stearns drafted a letter calling attention to the fourth leading cause of death in the United States: COPD.

“The National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) estimates that 12 million Americans have been diagnosed with COPD and an additional 12 million Americans are believed to have the disease, but are undiagnosed,” the letter states. “Yet among the diagnosed, more than six million patients are not being treated with a daily maintenance therapy.”

Miriam O’Day, the COPD Foundation’s Senior Director for Public Policy, says the message is about Congress taking action to raise awareness about COPD.

“We appreciate them recognizing November as COPD Awareness Month and letting their colleagues and the American public know there is much more that needs to be done to fight COPD,” O’Day says.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released an article about COPD in its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, finding that more than 126,000 Americans die each year from COPD, according to the letter.

“While the federal government has campaigns to address and eliminate many diseases including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and more, there is no nationally coordinated public health campaign that addresses early diagnosis, prevention, treatment and management of COPD,” the letter says. “A person with COPD dies every four minutes in the United States and COPD cost the U.S. economy \$32 billion, in direct and indirect costs in 2002.”

In addition to the letter, the resolution will educate members of Congress of the issues and importance of fighting COPD, according to O'Day.

"It's an important step in the recognition of COPD as the fourth leading cause of death in the United States, and highlights the need for a serious public health response," O'Day says.

The resolution was introduced into the House of Representatives by Rep. Stearns, and will go into the congressional record.

"This important COPD awareness resolution," O'Day says. "Is submitted and read on the floor of the House [and its] purpose is to inform and call attention to November COPD Awareness Month and the impact of COPD."

#### **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>.

#### **About COPD**

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. and the only chronic disease growing in mortality. It affects approximately 24 million Americans but only 12 million are diagnosed. COPD includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and adult onset (refractory) asthma. Symptoms include breathlessness, wheezing, and chronic coughing. For more information about COPD, visit <http://www.copdfoundation.org> or call 1-866-316-COPD (2673).

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