

Celebrities 'Tweet' to Drive COPD Awareness and Action

-- Patty Loveless Wins the DRIVE4COPD "Race for the Missing Millions" by Screening Nearly 6,000 People during Celebrity Kickoff --

Ridgefield, CT, February 18, 2010 – Hollywood, sports and music stars brought the public along for the ride as they raced 6,000 miles in four days to find the millions of people who may be at risk for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which kills one person every four minutes. Through Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube, tens of thousands of people followed the celebrities as they traveled to 14 cities to screen thousands of people for this relatively unknown top cause of death.

The result: more than 27,000 people completed the validated five-question screener available at DRIVE4COPD.COM to see if they were at risk for COPD. The screener helps people talk to their doctor about their breathing problems, which is important because most people are not diagnosed with COPD until they have already lost half of their lung function. The goal is to drive 1 million people to get screened in the first year of the campaign.

"We were thrilled with this level of engagement since COPD has been largely ignored even though it is the nation's fourth leading cause of death," said Chris Barrett, Senior Vice President at Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., the founding sponsor of the campaign. "And this is just the beginning, as the campaign will continue to build with many more activities and partnerships planned this year."

For Grammy Award-winning country music star **Patty Loveless**, Tweets from her fans and the buzz about her inspiring new single *Drive* bolstered the number of screeners she collected to win the first leg of the DRIVE4COPD "Race for the Missing Millions." Loveless beat out her fellow DRIVE4COPD celebrity ambassadors – Emmy-nominated actor **Jim Belushi**, former Pro Football great **Michael Strahan**, and Olympic Gold Medalist **Bruce Jenner** – who participated in the race in memory of relatives with COPD.

"I met hundreds of people along my route and it seems like nearly everyone knows someone with COPD," said Loveless, who lent her voice to the cause and traveled from Daytona, FL to Chicago. "It meant a lot to me to hear their stories and share my memories of my sister who struggled for years with emphysema, a form of COPD."

Go Daddy and NASCAR Nationwide Series™ driver **Danica Patrick**, who was the Grand Marshall of the "Race for the Missing Millions," had a strong showing with more than 9,000 screeners. Now, following the celebrity four-day race, the campaign continues with local COPD screening events at NASCAR races, major sporting events and country music concerts throughout the year. The DRIVE4COPD celebrity ambassadors will also be spreading their message through public service announcements and briefings on Capitol Hill.

It is estimated that half of the 24 million people in the United States who may have COPD remain undiagnosed. The serious, progressive disease – which includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both – robs people of their ability to breathe and kills more Americans each year than breast cancer and diabetes combined.

"People often ignore symptoms, such as shortness of breath, until they have trouble doing everyday activities," said Brian Carlin, MD, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, Drexel University School of Medicine. "This campaign helps people understand if they are at risk so they can get on the road to breathing better sooner."

The DRIVE4COPD campaign encourages the public to learn about COPD, recognize its early symptoms, complete a five-question screener at DRIVE4COPD.COM to find out if they may be at risk, and then talk to their doctor about their results. In addition to the validated risk screener, the DRIVE4COPD Web site provides information on the disease and on the importance of taking active steps to manage it with a doctor. It also includes many social media tools to get the word out.

DRIVE4COPD Screener

Given the underdiagnosis of COPD, there was a need for a reliable, self-scored questionnaire to identify individuals at risk for COPD. The development of this questionnaire began with a list of items identified for inclusion by a clinician working group of 10 pulmonologists and primary care physicians. A national survey of nearly 700 patients at 12 practitioner sites found five items that positively predicted airflow obstruction: breathlessness, productive cough, activity limitation, smoking history and age. These five items became the COPD Population Screener™ found at DRIVE4COPD.COM. The study validating this screener was published in April 2008 (Martinez, F. J., Raczek, A. E., Seifer, F. D., Conoscenti, C. S., Curtice, T. G. & D'Eletto, T., et al. Development and Initial Validation of a Self-Scored COPD Population Screener Questionnaire (COPD-PS). *COPD: Journal of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease*, 5:2, 85-95).

About COPD

Both types of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) – chronic bronchitis and emphysema – make it harder to breathe because less air is able to flow in and out of the lungs.

As many as 24 million Americans have COPD – even those who haven't smoked in years – and half of them are not diagnosed. COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. It kills one person every 4 minutes and more people each year than breast cancer and diabetes combined.

Common symptoms of COPD include coughing, with or without mucus, or shortness of breath. These symptoms are often confused with normal signs of aging. As COPD progresses, symptoms tend to get worse and more damage occurs in the lungs. Breathing gradually becomes more difficult until people with COPD feel like they are inhaling and exhaling through a small straw.

Because of its gradual onset, many patients are not diagnosed until they are hospitalized or require emergency care to treat the disease. By that time, their lungs may have already been critically damaged and they avoid activities that they used to enjoy because they become short of breath more easily. As such, COPD changes not only the life of the diagnosed person, but also of surrounding family and friends.

COPD can be managed to help people live and breathe easier. Early diagnosis of COPD is critical, as lung damage is not reversible but is treatable. Proper management of COPD is important to help patients breathe better, prevent complications and exacerbations, and improve quality of life. Lifestyle changes like staying active and quitting smoking can help improve symptoms. Yet even when people are diagnosed with COPD, only half of them are prescribed treatment to help them breathe better.

DRIVE4COPD Partnering Organizations

Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., the founding sponsor of the campaign, has joined forces with a cross-section of organizations on DRIVE4COPD to bring COPD to the forefront including:

American Lung Association

Now in its second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is "Fighting for Air" through research, education and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit www.lungusa.org.

COPD Foundation

The COPD Foundation is a not-for-profit organization created in 2004, and has become the COPD community's forefront organization, driven by the individuals affected by COPD, that has addressed educational, research and advocacy issues that concern the community in order to improve the quality of life for the 24 million Americans affected by COPD. For more information about the COPD Foundation and its programs, call the C.O.P.D. Information Line at 1-866-316-COPD (2673) or visit the website at www.copdfoundation.org.

NASCAR

The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc. (NASCAR) is the sanctioning body for one of North America's premier sports. NASCAR races are broadcast in more than 150 countries and 20 languages. NASCAR fans are the most brand loyal in all of sports, and as a result more Fortune 500 companies participate in NASCAR than any other sport.

About Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., based in Ridgefield, CT, is the largest U.S. subsidiary of Boehringer Ingelheim Corporation (Ridgefield, CT) and a member of the Boehringer Ingelheim group of companies.

The Boehringer Ingelheim group is one of the world's 20 leading pharmaceutical companies. Headquartered in Ingelheim, Germany, it operates globally with 138 affiliates in 47 countries and approximately 41,300 employees. Since it was founded in 1885, the family-owned company has been committed to researching, developing, manufacturing and marketing novel products of high therapeutic value for human and veterinary medicine.

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