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New Educational Campaign Seeks to Increase Patient and Healthcare Provider Communication about Prescription Medicines

Talk Before You Take Campaign Launches in Response to New Research Showing Communication Gaps

Rockville, MD (January 28, 2015) – New public research shows that there are gaps in communication between healthcare providers and patients about the benefits and potential risks of prescription medicines. Nearly half of Americans are taking prescription medicines, and over 20 percent of Americans take at least three. Yet research shows that approximately 62 percent of patients are not aware of any safety warnings about their medicines, and 10 percent of patients unaware of the possibility of a severe reaction or side effect to any of the medicines they are taking actually experience a serious drug reaction.

Improving communication about prescription medicines can help ensure that patients avoid adverse drug reactions, improve adherence, and live healthier lives. Today the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) is launching a national education campaign, *Talk Before You Take*, designed to address these gaps and encourage informed patient and healthcare provider engagement and conversation. The campaign and its foundational research have been developed through a grant provided by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

“We want to help patients fully understand how to maximize the benefits and minimize risks from medications,” said Janet Woodcock, M.D., director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. “This NCPIE project aims to provide healthcare providers and patients with educational materials and information that can spark more conversations during office visits and with the pharmacist.”

“As pharmacists, we are trained to constantly ask ourselves how we can be sure that patients understand instructions provided with medicines,” stated Elizabeth Keyes, RPh., Chief Operating Officer, American Pharmacists Association and Chair of the NCPIE Board of Directors. “This is especially important for patients who have multiple chronic conditions, are likely taking multiple prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines, and typically have more than one prescriber and sometimes even more than one pharmacy. This means that patients and caregivers have to keep track of and manage a great deal of information about different medicines from different sources. All of these factors can lead to a lack of patients' full understanding of their prescriptions' benefits, potential risks, and instructions to promote safe and appropriate medicine use. This new research underscores the need to focus on communications around prescription medications.”

The research was conducted by the Evidence Generation, Value and Access Center of Excellence within Ipsos Healthcare, a global independent research company, with input from the FDA and the Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness (CDSE), Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Approximately 2,000 consumers and 800 healthcare professionals across the U.S. were reached via surveys, representing individuals and their caregivers, pharmacists in community-based retail settings, and prescribers, including primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.

“This is an important undertaking given the critical role that consumer education and empowerment can play in improving safe medication use,” said G. Caleb Alexander, MD, MS, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine and a co-Director of CDSE.

As part of the *Talk Before You Take* campaign, NCPIE has convened a multi-stakeholder project advisory team to provide expert guidance for communicating essential medication safety and risk information. In addition, NCPIE is partnering with key stakeholder organizations to promote the campaign and disseminate educational materials designed for

healthcare providers and patients. The campaign's website, TalkBeforeYouTake.org, will serve as a resource and include free educational materials for download. The campaign seeks to reinforce four important tips for patients and caregivers to guide conversations with healthcare providers:

1. **Talk to your healthcare provider and ask questions about the benefits and potential risks of prescription medicines you take.**
2. **Tell your healthcare provider about *all* of the medicines you are taking—including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and dietary supplements.**
3. **Tell your healthcare provider about any allergies or sensitivities that you may have.**
4. **Read and follow the medicine label and directions.**

Visit TalkBeforeYouTake.org to learn more.

Previous NCIPIE medication education campaigns include: [BeMedicineSmart](#), [Medication Use Safety Training \(MUST\) for Seniors](#); National Brown Bag Medicine Review Program; [National "Talk About Your Medicines" Month](#); [BeMedWise – Promoting Safe Use of OTC Medicines](#), and multiple, audience-specific programs addressing prescription drug abuse prevention and the safe use of acetaminophen.

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About the National Council on Patient Information and Education

Organized in 1982, the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) is a nonprofit coalition of diverse organizations committed to promoting the wise use of medicines through trusted communication for better health. NCIPIE works to address critical medicine safe use issues like adherence improvement, prescription drug abuse prevention, reduction of medication errors, and quality improvements in healthcare provider-patient communication. For more information, visit www.talkaboutrx.org.

About Evidence Generation, Value and Access Center of Excellence, Ipsos Healthcare

Ipsos Healthcare's Evidence Generation, Value and Access Center of Excellence focuses on providing insights into payer, physician, and patient needs and market barriers and, accordingly, generates or demonstrates clinical, economic, and humanistic value propositions of products and services for optimal access across the market segments and therapy areas. The center employs traditional secondary research, retrospective and prospective observational cohort studies, cross-sectional surveys, and quantitative/qualitative research in the market access arena, leveraging its access to patients, physicians, and payer stakeholders in over 40 countries where Ipsos Healthcare teams operate.

About the Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

The goal of the Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness is to improve the safe and effective use of medications. Drawing on the combined expertise of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, the Center serves as a nexus for individuals at Johns Hopkins who are involved in research, education, clinical programs, and public service to improve prescription drug use and pharmaceutical policy. For more information, visit www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-drug-safety-and-effectiveness/.

About the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

The FDA, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, protects the public health by assuring the safety, effectiveness, and security of human and veterinary drugs, vaccines, and other biological products for human use, and medical devices. The agency also is responsible for the safety and security of our nation's food supply, cosmetics, dietary supplements, products that give off electronic radiation, and for regulating tobacco products.

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