

National Pain Foundation Declares September 15th PHN Awareness Day

After-shingles pain takes center stage during National Pain Awareness Month

Denver, Colo. – [September 15, 2009] – The National Pain Foundation (NPF) today declared September 15 as Postherpetic Neuralgia (PHN) Awareness Day. The first PHN Awareness Day falls during National Pain Awareness Month and was created to draw attention to the pain caused by shingles and PHN, also known as after-shingles pain. Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the same virus that causes chickenpox and can affect an individual at anytime without warning. More than 90 percent of adults in the United States have had chickenpox, placing them at risk for shingles. One in every five of the 1 million Americans that suffer from shingles each year will go on to develop PHN, a devastating condition that disproportionately affects those over the age of 50 or with weakened immune systems.

“PHN pain is excruciating and is one of the leading causes of pain-related suicide in the elderly, but it is often misunderstood and misdiagnosed because there is no visible rash or infection that appears on the skin,” said John Sebby, vice president of development for the NPF. “PHN Awareness Day is an important initiative to educate older Americans about the risks and symptoms of this debilitating condition.”

PHN Awareness Day is one of multiple initiatives that the NPF is spearheading to help spread the word about shingles and PHN. Together with the National Council on Aging (NCOA), the NPF is also leading the Patchwork of Hope Network, an educational campaign featuring live events across the country where attendees listen to presentations about PHN symptoms and potential treatment options, meet others affected by PHN and have an opportunity to create individual quilt squares to tell their story about how PHN has affected their lives. This campaign is made possible with support from Endo Pharmaceuticals. To date, [INSERT NUMBER] of quilt

squares have been decorated for a total of five quilts that combined are [INSERT LENGTH/WIDTH]. The final Patchwork of Hope Network event of 2009 is taking place at the Andrew Jackson Senior Center in New York City on September 16 and will be broadcast live on the Web at [INSERT LINK].

Additionally, in partnership with the NCOA and the Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA), the NPF sponsored the launch of an interactive and informational Web site, www.AfterShingles.com, where visitors can learn more about PHN and the Patchwork of Hope Network campaign. The Web site features steps to help patients take control of their pain and join a community of support.

“The NPF aims to empower people in pain through education, and the declaration of PHN Awareness Day, participation in the Patchwork of Hope Network and development of AfterShingles.com directly align with that mission,” said Sebby. “We want to let those suffering from PHN pain know that there is a network of support for them to learn more and connect with others who are affected by the condition.”

About Postherpetic Neuralgia (PHN)

Postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) is caused by injury to the peripheral nerves that occurs during an outbreak of the shingles virus and usually occurs in area of the shingles rash. However, the area and location of the affected party of the body varies with each individual. PHN pain is often described as burning, aching, sharp and itching and in some patients can last months or even years. The pain can be so severe that it significantly affects an individual's quality of life, sometimes leading to serious depression. PHN is one of the most common causes of pain-related suicide in the elderly, and people age 50 years or older or with weakened immune systems are most at risk.

About the Patchwork of Hope Network

Together, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and the National Pain Foundation (NPF) are spreading the word about postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), or after-shingles pain, through the Patchwork of Hope Network program. If you think you or someone you love is suffering from

PHN or after-shingles pain, please talk to your healthcare professional – only a healthcare professional can accurately diagnose PHN and recommend appropriate treatment options. This campaign is made possible with support from Endo Pharmaceuticals. For more information about shingles, PHN, and the Patchwork of Hope Network campaign visit www.AfterShingles.com.

About the National Pain Foundation

The National Pain Foundation (NPF), a non-profit organization, is the premier provider of information, education and support to people with chronic pain. Materials are provided for both patients and medical professionals interested in the field of chronic pain. The NPF aims to empower people in pain by educating them about their condition, providing information about the options available for managing their pain, teaching them to take a more active role in their treatment plan and helping them to connect with others who also are on this journey. For more information, visit www.nationalpainfoundation.org.