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New, Interactive Health Web Site Provides Information About a Painful and Often Debilitating Condition Affecting Older Americans

The New AfterShingles.com Helps Educate Consumers About Shingles and After-Shingles Pain

Washington D.C. – March 31, 2009 The Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA), the National Pain Foundation (NPF) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) today announced the re-launch of AfterShingles.com, an online resource offering tools and information to help educate consumers about shingles and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), or after-shingles pain, its impact on people's lives and steps to take to help manage the conditions.

"AfterShingles.com is a consumer-focused site that offers fresh, interactive tools such as a Q&A function with a physician and a downloadable pain calendar and check list," said Heather McKenzie, MBA, BSN, RN, senior director of clinical education and quality initiatives for VNAA. "This Web site will help patients talk with their healthcare providers about shingles and PHN."

Shingles affects approximately 1 million Americans each year, and about one in five of those suffering from shingles may go on to develop PHN, or after-shingles pain. PHN pain is often debilitating and may affect quality of life, interrupting daily routines for months or even years. AfterShingles.com is an educational resource that also helps connect patients and caregivers to build a grass-roots network of support.

"Pain is one of the most important public health issues facing the United States today, affecting more than one in four Americans and costing the U.S. an estimated \$100 billion each year," said John Sebby, vice president of development for the National Pain Foundation. "AfterShingles.com offers a variety of important resources to help people learn about PHN, a very serious type of pain, and let them know that they are not suffering alone."

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The new AfterShingles.com also includes a micro site for the Patchwork of Hope Network, an educational program led by the NCOA and the NPF to raise awareness of PHN. The program includes several live educational events throughout the year where attendees will have the opportunity to create individual quilt squares to tell their story about how PHN has affected their lives. As a part of the program, AfterShingles.com visitors will be able to access the micro site and decorate their own virtual quilt square online. For every virtual quilt square made, Endo Pharmaceuticals will make a \$5 donation to the VNAA to support shingles and PHN education.

“After-shingles pain is most common among older Americans and can be emotionally distressful and isolating,” said Scott Parkin, vice president of communications for NCOA. “The Patchwork of Hope Network was created to help raise awareness of this condition on a national level.”

The site was originally launched by the VNAA and Endo Pharmaceuticals in 2001. The re-launch of this Web site has been made possible with support from Endo Pharmaceuticals.

Shingles and PHN Background

Shingles is an infection caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox, the varicella zoster virus. Once you have chickenpox, the virus can stay quiet in the nerve tissue of your body for years. But for many people, the virus “awakens” and forms blisters on the skin.

PHN results from nerve damage caused by the shingles virus and usually is felt in the area of the previous shingles rash, but the size of the area of PHN pain can vary considerably. PHN pain can vary in its description, but is most commonly described as burning, aching, itching and sharp.

About Visiting Nurse Associations of America

The Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA) is the official national association for non-profit, community-based Visiting Nurse Agencies (VNAs) and non-profit home health providers, who care for and treat approximately 4 million patients each year. The nation's VNAs share a non-profit mission to provide cost-effective and compassionate home healthcare to some of the nation's most vulnerable individuals, particularly the elderly and individuals with disabilities. For more information, visit www.VNAA.org.

About 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.

About National Council on Aging

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is a non-profit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCOA is a national voice for older Americans - especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged - and the community organizations that serve them. It brings together non-profit organizations, businesses and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and



benefits improve their health, live independently and remain active in their communities. For more information, visit www.ncoa.org.

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