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**New Studies Gauge Knowledge, Attitudes and Preferences of Patients with Irritable
Bowel Syndrome**

-- Significant Percentage Mistakenly Believe IBS Causes Cancer --
-- More Information Could Allay Many Fears and Concerns --

HONOLULU, October 31, 2005 -- Significant misconceptions about the causes of their condition and mistaken beliefs about its potential progression into other diseases, including cancer, marks the knowledge of a sample of patients with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) in two recent studies by researchers at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire. Presented at the 70th Annual Scientific Meeting of the American College of Gastroenterology, these studies echo findings presented at ACG by Dr. Alben Halpert of Boston Medical Center and colleagues at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on patient perceptions of IBS and their preferences about patient education.

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Study Finds Significant Concerns and Misconceptions

“IBS is one of the most common medical conditions, and our study reveals that a lot of people are facing a problem, they don’t feel well, they have significant concerns, and they don’t have enough information,” said Brian E. Lacy, Ph.D., M.D., one of the investigators at Dartmouth-Hitchcock who conducted two separate analyses of 261 respondents to study questionnaires.

In one analysis, Dr. Lacy and his colleagues found that almost half (42.9 percent) of respondents believed that IBS develops due to food allergy or intolerance, while an even larger percentage (82 percent) reported that a change in their daily routine causes IBS. Significant misconceptions were identified regarding the natural history of IBS, with one-third of respondents believing that once IBS develops it will never resolve, and 16.7 percent expressing the belief that IBS will turn into cancer. Of these patients, 87 percent reported that IBS

significantly affects their lives, with daily activities (40.1 percent), work life (19.3 percent) and social life (11.2 percent) being the most frequently affected.

In a related study of the same survey respondents, Dr. Lacy and his colleagues found that this sample of patients with IBS did not understand the causes of their condition. A large percentage cited dietary factors (80.7 percent), anxiety (87.9 percent), and depression (68.2) as the most frequent causes of IBS. IBS patients in this study believe that IBS increases the risk of colon cancer (21.5 percent) and increases the risk of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (30.5 percent). IBD is an inflammatory condition of the intestine that can result in bleeding, fever, elevation of the white blood cell count, as well as diarrhea and cramping abdominal pain. IBD includes ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

"This is the first study to assess IBS patients' knowledge regarding their disorder. Our findings highlight the need for effective educational programs for IBS patients," concluded Dr. Lacy.

National Survey on Patient Education in IBS

Albena Halpert, M.D. of Boston Medical Center and Douglas Drossman, M.D., FACP of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill developed and fielded a questionnaire to identify patients' perceptions about IBS, their preferences on the type of information they need, as well as educational media and expectations from health care providers. Responses from 200 patients with IBS revealed misperceptions about IBS developing into other conditions, including colitis, malnutrition and cancer. This survey found IBS patients were most interested in learning about foods to avoid (60 percent), causes of IBS (55 percent), medications (58 percent), coping strategies (56 percent), and psychological factors related to IBS (55 percent). The respondents indicated that they wanted their physician to be available via phone or e-mail following a visit (80 percent) and have the ability to listen (80 percent), provide hope (73 percent) and support (63 percent).

About Irritable Bowel Syndrome

IBS is a functional gastrointestinal (GI) disorder characterized by recurring symptoms of abdominal discomfort or pain associated with an altered bowel habit, either constipation, diarrhea, or both. More than 58 million people suffer from IBS, which affects more women (80%) than men. IBS is a real medical condition, but it is not life threatening, and will not lead to other serious diseases. In IBS, the GI tract may function differently, processing more slowly (or more quickly) than the average person. While the cause of this different "pace" of the GI tract in IBS is not known, and there is no cure, there are usually ways to help manage specific symptoms. Physicians now have more scientific knowledge and an improved range of

treatment options that can provide relief for IBS sufferers. The American College of Gastroenterology has resources for patients with IBS online at www.ibsrelief.org and free educational materials are available by calling ACG's toll-free hotline 866-IBS-RELIEF.

About the American College of Gastroenterology

The ACG was formed in 1932 to advance the scientific study and medical treatment of disorders of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. The College promotes the highest standards in medical education and is guided by its commitment to meeting the needs of clinical gastroenterology practitioners. Consumers can get more information on GI diseases through the following ACG-sponsored programs:

- 1-800-978-7666 (free brochures on common GI disorders, including ulcer, colon cancer, gallstones, and liver disease)
- 1-800-HRT-BURN (free brochure and video on heartburn and GERD)
- www.acg.gi.org (ACG's Web site)

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