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Canadian Study Findings Show Improvement in Work Attendance, Productivity After Consistent Treatment of Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Disease Second Only to the Common Cold as the Leading Cause of Workplace Absenteeism

HONOLULU, October 31, 2005 -- A new study shows that treating Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) with constipation may have a significant impact on absenteeism from work, as well as improving presenteeism – defined as coming to work but being less productive. Canadian researchers from The University of Alberta and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada presented findings of a study of tegaserod in patients with IBS characterized by constipation at the 70th Annual Scientific Meeting of the American College of Gastroenterology.

"IBS symptoms of abdominal pain or discomfort, bloating and constipation are associated with impaired quality of life and are the second most common cause of work-related absenteeism," according to Dr. Nigel Flook of the University of Alberta.

The study was conducted in a routine clinical practice setting with patients from 481 community physician sites across Canada. Researchers analyzed baseline data and survey responses at four and twelve weeks from 483 patients. They found that treatment with tegaserod was associated with a decrease in self-reported absenteeism in patients with symptoms of abdominal pain/discomfort, bloating and constipation: 27 percent of patients reported improvement in the number of days per month missed at school or work. Significant findings included improvements among approximately 50 percent of patients in the number of days per month when they accomplished less at school, work or home; while about 40 percent reported improvements in the number of days per month they had to cancel or reschedule activities because of their symptoms.

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. 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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