

Media Advisory / Interview Opportunity

Newsweek Article Reinforces Negative Pain Stigmas

Toronto, ON – August 19, 2010 – An article recently published in *Newsweek* entitled “Prescription Nation: Why we should worry about prescription drug abuse,” provides an unbalanced opinion on the complex and important issue of pain medication misuse and abuse. The American Pain Foundation (APF) has taken a strong stance on this article and believes it reinforces stigmas and stereotypes associated with pain and pain management. The Canadian Pain Society (CPS) and The Canadian Pain Coalition (CPC) applaud the APFs position on this inappropriate, biased *Newsweek* article and support their efforts to advocate for increased awareness and education surrounding this vital public health issue.

“This *Newsweek* article has focused only on the misuse of prescription drugs as the problem rather than the growing silent epidemic of chronic pain” said Dr. Mary Lynch, President of the Canadian Pain Society. Dr. Roman Jovey, a Canadian expert in pain and addiction adds: “The issue of misuse of prescription pain medicine is a serious safety concern and needs to be addressed in a holistic way by targeting the many reasons people choose to abuse drugs. The solution is not simply a case of restricting the supply of pain medications, as so many media reporters seem to suggest. Drug abuse and addiction is more about the person taking a drug and their vulnerabilities rather than the properties of the drug itself.” Dr. Lynch further notes, “Opioids are among the best painkillers we have available. Any measures taken to address drug misuse in a small percentage of the population should not limit access to these valuable medications for the majority of people who take them appropriately for the control of pain.”

Canada’s pain management experts agree that pain medication, when prescribed properly and taken as directed, can effectively reduce suffering and dramatically improve a patient’s quality of life and contribution to society. “It is essential to improve public understanding and awareness surrounding one of the most misunderstood areas of modern medicine,” said Lynn Cooper, President of the Canadian Pain Coalition.

According to Statistics Canada, 0.8 percent of the population has an addiction to illicit drugs.¹ Health Canada also notes that the rates of psychoactive pharmaceutical use and abuse remains comparable to the rates reported in 2008.

Interview opportunities:

Canadian pain experts Dr. Mary Lynch and Dr. Roman Jovey are available to comment on effective pain management practices. Lynn Cooper, a patient and President of the Canadian Pain Coalition, is also available for comment.

About the Canadian Pain Society:

The Canadian Pain Society has been a chapter of the International Association for the Study of Pain since 1982. The aim of the CPS is to foster and encourage research on pain mechanisms and pain syndromes and to help improve the management of patients with acute and chronic pain by bringing together the basic scientists and health professionals of various disciplines and backgrounds who have an interest in pain research and management.

About the Canadian Pain Coalition:

The Canadian Pain Coalition (CPC) is *THE National Voice of People with Pain*. Incorporated in 2004 as a non-profit organization, the CPC is a partnership of pain consumer groups, individuals, health professionals who care for people in pain and scientists studying better ways to treat pain. CPC promotes sustained improvement in the understanding, prevention, treatment and management of all types of pain in Canada. CPC accomplishes this through pain education, awareness activities and advocacy initiatives. CPC obtained the Senate Declaration of National Pain Awareness Week in 2004.

-30-

For further information or to schedule an interview:

Caroline De Silva

Argyle Communications

416-968-7311 Ext. 231

cdesilva@argylecommunications.com

References

¹ Health Canada. Drug and Alcohol Statistics 2010. <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/drugs-drogues/stat/index-eng.php>