

Johns Hopkins & American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Launch Award Program to Recognize Top Healthcare Providers for Clinical Excellence

Program to honor top healthcare providers participating in the Educational Initiative on Constipation for superior clinical care to chronic constipation and IBS-C patients

NEW YORK CITY – Sept. 25, 2008 – The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Office of Continuing Medical Education (JHU) and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) announced today the launch of the Educational Initiative on Constipation (EIC) Award for Clinical Excellence (ACE™) program. This professional award recognizes physicians, physician groups, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants who have demonstrated expanded knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as improved care and positive results for patients with chronic constipation and IBS with constipation (IBS-C) due to their participation in the JHU and AANP EIC initiative.

“Through the ACE™ program, Johns Hopkins Continuing Medical Education recognizes healthcare providers who deliver superior patient care and positive results as they integrate their learnings from the EIC program, allowing them to better identify and manage the large number of underdiagnosed and undertreated patients suffering from chronic constipation and IBS-C,” states Mark Donowitz, M.D., Professor of Medicine and Physiology, the LeBoff Professor for Research in Digestive Diseases at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, former President of the American Gastroenterology Association Institute, and the EIC Course Director. “These healthcare providers are examples to the profession and deserve to be acknowledged by colleagues, patients and the overall community for the quality care they provide to this underserved patient population.”

To be eligible, the applicant must be a physician, physician group, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant who participates in the EIC program, completes the performance improvement (PI) component of the educational initiative and demonstrates optimized care and outcomes for patients with constipation or IBS-C. There is no fee to apply. Nine healthcare providers (three physicians, three nurse practitioners and three physician assistants) will be recognized by Johns Hopkins Continuing Medical Education and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners using an objective, accepted methodology to evaluate patient care with outcome-related metrics. Winners will receive an award certificate from Johns Hopkins Continuing Medical Education and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, a listing on the Johns Hopkins University Continuing Medical Education web site for one year, and national and local recognition for the healthcare provider's clinical expertise.

For more detailed information about eligibility and the application process, please visit the Johns Hopkins Continuing Medical Education website at www.hopkinscme.edu/ofp/eic, or call 201-984-3332 ext. 4, or email EICinfo@gullapalliandassoc.com.

“Not only does the ACE™ program recognize clinicians who have successfully implemented best practices gained from the EIC, but it also encourages other healthcare providers to embrace evidence-based medicine to improve clinical outcomes for patients with chronic constipation or IBS-C within their own practice,” said Julia Pallentino M.S.N., J.D., A.R.N.P. at GI Associates of Tallahassee. “The benefits of the EIC and the ACE™ programs are far-reaching for individuals suffering from these conditions, as well as for the public health of the nation.”

About the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

In July 2008, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked the Johns Hopkins Hospital #1 among American hospitals for the 18th consecutive year. In 2006, the Johns Hopkins Office of CME received “Accreditation with Commendation” for six years, the highest ranking issued by the ACCME. Hopkins CME has been recognized as a center for “Best Practices” and as a resource to ACCME-accredited providers. For more information, please visit www.hopkinscme.edu or contact Victor Marrow, Ph.D., Executive Director, Office of Funded Programs at vmarrow@jhmi.edu.

About the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

With over 25,000 individual members and 154 group members, AANP represents the interests of over 125,000 nurse practitioners. AANP has steadily expanded its services and priorities to meet its mission to serve as a resource for nurse practitioners (NPs), their patients and other healthcare consumers; to promote excellence in practice, education and research; to provide legislative leadership; to advance health policy and establish healthcare standards; and to advocate for access to quality and cost effective healthcare by NPs. As the largest and only full-service national, professional membership organization for NPs of all specialties, AANP advocates at local, state, and federal levels for the recognition of NPs as providers of high-quality, cost-effective, and personalized healthcare. For more information, please visit www.aanp.org.

About the Educational Initiative on Constipation

The EIC is a multidisciplinary, performance improvement (PI) CME/CE educational initiative designed to measurably improve the treatment of chronic constipation and IBS-C by gastroenterologists, primary care physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. The foundation for this program is a live symposium held at the American College of Gastroenterology 2008 Annual Scientific Meeting and Postgraduate Course in Orlando, Florida, on October 3-8, 2008.

The core curriculum will focus on improving the knowledge and behavior of healthcare providers in the areas of IBS-C and chronic constipation. The educational program will be presented to participants in various modules containing interventions ranging from a performance improvement component to webinars and video satellite broadcasts.

About Chronic Constipation and IBS with Constipation (IBS-C)

Chronic constipation is a pervasive condition in the United States. Patients with chronic constipation often experience hard stools, straining during bowel movements and not enough bowel movements during the week. People with chronic constipation can experience serious discomfort which interferes with their ability to work and their quality of life. Up to 26 million Americans suffer from the condition and, of these, about five million are classified as “severe”. Data from the National Disease and Therapeutic Index shows a relatively stable value of 2.5 million annual physician visits for constipation and more recent data that includes emergency room encounters estimates the number of physician visits for constipation-related complaints at 5.7 million in 2001. Using the conservative estimates of “prevalence, healthcare seeking, and costs,” the annual direct costs attributable to chronic constipation in North America are in the billions of dollars.

Up to one-sixth of adults experience irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), a condition marked by disturbed bowel function and abdominal pain. IBS patients can have three different sets of symptoms: diarrhea-predominant (IBS-D), constipation-predominant (IBS-C) and mixed or alternating disorder (IBS-M). About 35 percent of patients suffer from IBS-C, and IBS accounts for 12 percent of adult visits to primary care physicians in the U.S.

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