

Novel Collaborative Educational Initiative on Constipation to Supply Patient-Level Outcomes Data to Multidisciplinary Providers

JERSEY CITY, N.J. – Sept. 3, 2008 – The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners announced today the kickoff of a large educational initiative designed to educate a variety of healthcare providers on the gastroenterology-specific condition of constipation. The Educational Initiative on Constipation (EIC) is a multidisciplinary, performance improvement activity intended to measurably improve the management of patients with chronic constipation (CC) and irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (IBS-C) by gastroenterologists, primary care physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants, one of the goals of which is to improve coordinated evaluation and care of these patients.

“When evaluating and treating IBS-C or chronic constipation, there is a significant variance in the level of understanding of the initial provider versus that of a gastroenterologist sub-specialist,” states Mark Donowitz, MD, Professor of Medicine and Physiology, the LeBoff Professor for Research in Digestive Diseases at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and past president of the American Gastroenterology Association Institute, and course director for the EIC. “The EIC will assist in narrowing that knowledge gap, resulting in improvements in clinical treatment decision-making, as well as patient outcomes.”

Currently, there is no widely accepted, clinically useful definition of constipation. In addition, patients suffering from this condition experience extreme discomfort, affecting not only their quality of life, but also their ability to work. Data has shown that many patients are dissatisfied with traditional treatment options, primarily because of lack of efficacy.

“This educational program leverages patient-level data to assist clinicians in improving their care of patients with IBS-C and chronic constipation based on real-world outcomes data, the foundation of evidence-based medicine,” said Julia Pallentino, MSN, ARNP. “This is a real paradigm shift in the healthcare industry, which we anticipate will deliver a substantial improvement in participating providers’ knowledge, behavior and competencies, as well as in patient outcomes.”

The EIC will not only assist providers in understanding the symptoms-based criteria for chronic constipation, but will also provide insights when initial therapy is not likely to be successful and when more detailed evaluations should be sought, as well as implement practice performance-based changes in response.

By educating a diverse group of healthcare professionals on these issues, such as gastroenterologists, primary care physicians, nurses, physician assistants and nurse practitioners, there is more certainty that all of the needs of the patient will be met.

About the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

In July 2008, U.S. News & World ranked The Johns Hopkins Hospital #1 among American hospitals for the 18th consecutive time. In 2006, the Johns Hopkins Office of CME received “Accreditation With Commendation” for 6 years, the highest ranking issued by the ACCME. Hopkins’ CME has been recognized as a center for “Best Practices” as a resource to ACCME-accredited providers. For more information please visit www.hopkinscme.net. For further information 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 interest of over 125,000 NPs. AANP has steadily expanded its services and priorities to meet its mission to serve as a resource for nurse practitioners (NP), their patients and other healthcare consumers; to promote excellence in practice, education and research; to provide legislative leadership; to advance health policy and establish health care standards; and to advocate for access to quality and cost effective health care 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 Chronic Constipation and IBS with Constipation

Chronic constipation is a very common condition. 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 adversely affects their ability to work and their quality of life. Up to 26 million Americans suffer from the condition and of these about 5 million have a severe problem. Data from the National Disease and Therapeutic Index shows a relatively stable value of 2.5 million annual physician visits for constipation with more recent data that include emergency room encounters puts 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% of patients suffer from IBS-C. IBS accounts for 12% of adult visits to primary care physicians in the US.

About the Educational Initiative on Constipation

The EIC is a multidisciplinary, performance improvement (PI) CME/CE educational activity designed measurably to improve the management of IBS-C by gastroenterologists, primary care physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants who treat patients with chronic constipation (CC) and irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (IBS-C). The foundation for this activity is a satellite symposium held in accompaniment of the American College of Gastroenterology 2008 Annual Scientific Meeting and Postgraduate Course in Orlando, Florida October 3-8, 2008.

The core curriculum for this activity will focus on improving the knowledge and behavior of healthcare providers in the area of IBS-C and chronic constipation. The planned activity will be presented to learners in various modules containing interventions ranging from a performance improvement component to webinars, and video satellite broadcasts.

Contact:

Amendola Communications for Gullapalli and Associates
Kate Donlon, kdonlon@ACmarketingPR.com
619-876-2654
Jan Shulman, jshulman@ACmarketingPR.com
480-664-8412 ext. 12