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New Survey Highlights Significant Disparities and Misperceptions of People with Diabetes and Healthcare Providers

People with Diabetes Report Incidence and Impact of Nerve Pain is Double the Amount Estimated by Healthcare Providers

ROCKLIN, CA—(Marketwire – August 21, 2012)—The American Chronic Pain Association (ACPA) in collaboration with Pfizer Inc announced today results of a new survey that shed light on a communication gap between people with one of the most common complications of diabetes—diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPN)—and healthcare providers. These issues are the focus of an educational initiative, Diabetic Nerve Pain: Starting the Dialogue, which launched today providing resources for people with DPN and healthcare providers available at www.TheACPA.org and www.DiabetesPainHelp.com.

More than one in five of the estimated 26 million Americans with diabetes experience pain as a result of DPN, commonly referred to as diabetic nerve pain, or painful DPN. Despite its prevalence, a new survey of 1,004 people with DPN symptoms and 500 healthcare providers demonstrates major misconceptions and a significant lack of awareness surrounding DPN and painful DPN:

- More than eight in 10 (83 percent) people with DPN symptoms report experiencing painful symptoms; however, on average, HCPs estimate that fewer than half (41 percent) of their patients with DPN experience pain.
- Three-quarters of respondents (77 percent) report their DPN symptoms impact daily activities; conversely, on average, HCPs estimate that only 38 percent of their patients with DPN suffer daily limitations: half the amount reported by patients in the survey.

“The American Chronic Pain Association realizes the importance of recognizing the symptoms of painful DPN and the impact it can have on a person’s life,” said Penney Cowan, executive director of the American Chronic Pain Association. “We hope that our campaign will shed light on the importance for individuals to have a meaningful conversation with their healthcare provider about what they can do to better recognize and manage symptoms. As part of the campaign, we are excited to introduce new educational and communication tools that will inform and empower individuals.”

The Diabetic Nerve Pain: Starting the Dialogue campaign seeks to motivate people with painful DPN to proactively discuss their pain with their healthcare providers, help increase understanding and identification of the often difficult to describe symptoms of DPN, and provide a platform for dialogue between healthcare providers and patients.
The survey also revealed:

**Substantial gaps in communication:**
- Fewer than half of those with painful DPN say they speak about it regularly with their healthcare provider, and most say that symptoms are discussed only briefly or in passing (72 percent) rather than in detail (28 percent).
- Conversely, nearly three quarters (73 percent) of healthcare providers report discussing DPN symptoms at most or all visits, and 45 percent report that when they speak about these symptoms, they are discussed in detail.

**Difficulty describing DPN symptoms:**
- Nearly one-third (30 percent) of healthcare providers report they rely on their patients to talk about pain, and this can be a challenge.
- More than half of both HCPs and people with painful DPN report that DPN symptoms can be difficult to describe (69 percent and 56 percent), respectively.
- Among those suffering from painful DPN, four out of five (81 percent) say the pain is different from other kinds of pain they are used to experiencing, and fewer than half (41 percent) report that they have been definitively diagnosed with DPN.

**Need for enhanced understanding among those in pain:**
- Nearly one in five (18 percent) people with painful DPN believe that the condition is reversible and nearly half (43 percent) are not sure.
- Half (51 percent) of people with painful DPN believe that controlling blood sugar will help these symptoms go away, while a third (31 percent) are unsure.
- Because nerve damage is not reversible, it is important that people with painful DPN know that there are management tools and strategies specifically for this type of pain.

For most people, diabetic nerve pain affects the extremities – the feet and hands – and is sometimes referred to as a sock/glove pattern, as symptoms may be felt at the tips of the fingers or toes and then move along through the hands and feet.

People with diabetes who think they are experiencing painful DPN should talk to their healthcare provider and describe the type of pain they are feeling, discuss how the pain has impacted daily life and note how frequently they are experiencing it. For more information on the survey and resources on painful DPN, including tips for discussing the condition with healthcare providers and tools to help identify symptoms, please visit www.DiabetesPainHelp.com and www.TheACPA.org.

**About the Survey**
The survey, conducted online in May 2012 by Versta Research, was taken by 1,004 adults living in the U.S. diagnosed with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes who reported experiencing any symptoms of diabetic peripheral neuropathy and 500 healthcare providers in clinical practice who treat people with diabetes, including 250 generalist physicians (family/general practice and internists), 150 specialist physicians (endocrinologists, neurologists, pain medicine specialists and podiatrists), and 100 nurses and physician assistants (including 30 non-prescribing RNs). Healthcare providers surveyed were not necessarily providing care to the people with diabetes who participated in this survey. On average, the survey respondents with diabetes were diagnosed 12 years ago, their mean age was 55 years, 53 percent were women and 47
percent were men. The survey was developed through a collaboration between the ACPA and Pfizer Inc.

**About Diabetic Nerve Pain**
More than half of the nearly 26 million people with diabetes in the U.S. have some form of nerve damage, a common complication of diabetes. More than one in five individuals with diabetes experience diabetic nerve pain, one form of nerve damage. Nerve pain that occurs with diabetes is different from other types of pain such as a muscle ache or sprained ankle. It can include the following common symptoms in the hands or feet: burning or shooting pain, pins and needles, stabbing or jabbing pain, painful tingling, numbness or insensitivity to pain or temperature, extreme sensitivity to touch, even light touch, loss of balance and coordination. This complication can impact walking, enjoyment of life, sleep, normal work, mood and general activity. Nerve damage caused by diabetes is most common in people who are unable to properly control their blood glucose over time or are overweight, as the condition may be caused by high blood sugar levels that lead to damaged nerves over time. While people with diabetes can develop nerve problems at any time, the risk is greater the longer a person has had diabetes. Diabetic nerve pain has been recognized in the medical community as a condition with a unique nature that requires specialized treatment. For more information, visit www.DiabetesPainHelp.com.

**About the American Chronic Pain Association (ACPA)**
The American Chronic Pain Association has offered support and information for people with chronic pain since 1980. Its mission is to facilitate peer support and education for individuals with chronic pain and their families so that these individuals may live more fully in spite of their pain, and to raise awareness among the healthcare community, policy makers and the public at large about issues associated with living with chronic pain.

ACPA support groups meet in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and in many other nations around the world. In addition, the ACPA provides a wealth of materials, including self-help manuals, videos, workbooks and other resources that can help people with pain and their families. These materials, created by people with pain for people with pain, offer unique insight into the reality of chronic pain and its management and hope for improving quality of life for those who live with pain daily.

Learn more about the American Chronic Pain Association at www.TheACPA.org.

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