

New “Stand Together for AD” campaign provides strength, support and important resources for 11 million Alzheimer’s caregivers

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- “Stand Together for AD: Strength and Support for Alzheimer’s” at AlzheimersDisease.com empowers caregivers with new resources and tools to help navigate challenges of caring for a loved one with Alzheimer’s
- Campaign addresses the vital needs of Alzheimer’s caregivers, a group at risk of emotional, health, work and relationship issues
- Leeza Gibbons, Alzheimer’s caregiving advocate and Emmy-winning TV and radio personality, kicks off campaign during National Alzheimer’s Awareness Month and National Family Caregivers Month

East Hanover, November 17, 2010 — More than five million people in the United States (U.S.) have Alzheimer’s disease (AD), a progressive and devastating condition that also impacts millions of more people who love and care for these patients. Last year in the U.S., the 11 million unpaid caregivers for patients with Alzheimer’s or another dementia provided 12.5 billion hours of care. While caregiving can be rewarding, it also can be a long and difficult journey, which often affects work, finances, relationships and health. To help caregivers navigate the challenges of this journey, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation has partnered with Leeza Gibbons, Alzheimer’s caregiving advocate and TV and radio personality, to create a new educational campaign called “Stand Together for AD: Strength and Support for Alzheimer’s,” which includes important information, resources and access to a new caregiver support program at www.AlzheimersDisease.com.

Research shows caregivers have a high risk of poor health. Caregivers often experience high levels of depression, new hypertension and new coronary heart disease. The stress of family caregiving for people with dementia has been shown to impact a person’s immune system for up to three years after their caregiving ends, increasing their chances of developing a chronic illness themselves. Many caregivers have to downsize work hours or leave their jobs due to caregiving responsibilities, and 39 percent say they have strained marriages due to caregiving responsibilities.

“As my mother died in slow motion from Alzheimer’s disease, my family and I were depleted and often depressed. We cared for my mom for nearly ten years and as she battled Alzheimer’s, we battled isolation, frustration and fear. Watching her decline felt like an emotional, physical and spiritual assault, which every member of my family dealt with individually,” said Leeza Gibbons. “I learned a lot from the experience and know that being a caregiver is not something you can do alone. The mission of “Stand Together for AD” is close to my heart because it will educate Alzheimer’s caregivers and empower them to seek and accept the support they need to get through their difficult and brave journey.”

Caregiving is a responsibility that requires strength and support as the progressive disease robs loved ones of memories, energy, and freedom; caregivers may be too overwhelmed, frustrated, or depressed to seek out the help they need. Many more people will become caregivers in the coming years, as the number of Americans with AD is expected to increase significantly.

“Any type of caregiving, especially for people with Alzheimer's, can have a serious physical and emotional effect. I can't emphasize enough the importance of caregivers seeking out help to cope and making sure they attend to their own health as well,” said James E. Galvin, MD, MPH, Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry at the NYU Langone Medical Center and Director of the Pearl S Barlow Center for Memory Evaluation and Treatment. “Caregivers play a critical role and should also feel empowered to speak to their loved ones” healthcare providers with any questions or concerns about caring for someone with Alzheimer's. It's important to have open discussions to maintain the well-being of the caregiver and health of the patient.”

Caregivers can visit www.AlzheimersDisease.com for more information about the “Stand Together for AD” educational campaign, AD and caregiving, and resources including tips on coping and staying healthy, access to a new caregiver support program, and stories from fellow Alzheimer's caregivers. Those who register on the site will also receive Leeza's personal caregiving tips.

About Leeza Gibbons

Leeza Gibbons is an award-winning television and radio personality, author, producer and businesswoman. She recently co-authored *Take Your Oxygen First*, a book for those giving care to people with Alzheimer's disease and other memory loss disorders. Leeza was a caregiver to her mother and founded the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation and Leeza's Place, which provide support for caregivers, in her mother's honor. There are now eight Leeza's Place centers across the United States, with locations in California, Florida, Illinois and Texas.

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Media Relations

Anna Frable

Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation

1-862-778-5388

1-732-673-5262

anna.frable@novartis.com

Julie Masow

Novartis Corporation

1-212-830-2465 (direct)

1 862-579-8456 (mobile)

julie.masow@novartis.com

email: media.relations@novartis.com

Anna Frable

Julie Masow

Novartis Pharmaceuticals
Corporation

Novartis Corporation

1-862-778-5388

+ 1-212-830-2465 (direct)

1-732-673-5262

+1 862-579-8456 (mobile)

anna.frable@novartis.com

julie.masow@novartis.com -->

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