



HEALTH ANSWERS

Demand For Better Medicines On The Rise

(NAPSA)—With the first baby boomers turning 60 this year, there will be an increased demand for new, innovative medicines.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 90 million Americans suffer from chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, Parkinson's, arthritis, stroke and congestive heart failure. Such chronic diseases account for seven out of 10 deaths in the U.S.

Fortunately, more than 2,700 potential new medicines are in various stages of clinical development today in the U.S. However, on average, only one out of every 250 potential new medicines will be approved for patient use. The current drug development, review and approval process for each new medicine requires 10 to 15 years, multiple clinical trials, thousands of patient volunteers and hundreds of millions of dollars.

"It's taking too long for new medicines to reach patients suffering from chronic diseases. With Parkinson's, for example, it has been 40 years since a breakthrough therapy came to market. Even with considerable interest and investment in the field, we still don't have a drug or device that slows or stops the progression of this unrelenting disease. Patients do not have time to wait," said Mary Richards, director of government relations for the Parkinson's Action Network. "Clearly, the drug development and approval process must be improved and modernized to meet the country's growing health care needs."

Fast Facts on Chronic Disease

- More than 90 million Americans live with chronic illnesses.¹
- Chronic diseases account for 70% of all deaths in the United States.¹
- The medical care costs of people with chronic diseases account for more than 75% of the nation's \$1.4 trillion medical care costs.¹
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for all racial and ethnic groups in the United States.¹

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (November 18, 2005). Chronic Disease Overview. Retrieved October 11, 2006 from <http://www.cdc.gov/nccphp/overview.htm#4>



In an attempt to begin to address this challenge, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has launched the Critical Path Initiative (CPI), a multiyear program to modernize the scientific process through which a newly discovered drug or medical device gets to the pharmacy shelf. Recently, the leading pharmaceutical companies have endorsed the CPI and begun partnering with the FDA on implementing the initiative.

"The Critical Path Initiative is a step in the right direction to ensuring that medicines, medical devices and other treatments are approved as quickly and safely as possible to help people better manage their health," said Richards. "Critical Path holds great promise for the millions of Americans with chronic disease."