

# ♥ HEART HEALTH

## Good News For Heart Failure Patients

(NAPSA)—A popular blood pressure medicine is offering new hope for heart failure patients who find themselves unable to tolerate the side effects of angiotensin-converting-enzyme (ACE) inhibitors—a common type of heart failure therapy.

Unlike heart attacks, heart failure is not a sudden event. Instead, it is the slow, steady weakening of the heart muscle until it no longer pumps blood effectively and allows fluid to seep into the lungs. Heart failure typically develops after the heart is damaged by a heart attack, high blood pressure, diabetes or other factors. Ironically, because more people are surviving heart attacks than ever before, more and more people are also developing heart failure.

Heart failure is now the fastest growing type of heart disease in the world—with 1,500 new cases diagnosed in the U.S. each day. Heart failure is also the leading reason people age 65 and older are hospitalized. The good news is that heart failure can be treated. ACE inhibitors are recognized as the standard of care. However, between 20 and 50 percent of heart failure patients are unable to take ACE inhibitors due to side effects, such as hacking cough, and other reasons.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved Diovan® (valsartan) for the treatment of heart failure patients who are intolerant of ACE inhibitors. Already used by millions of people for high blood pressure, Diovan is the first major new type of treatment the FDA has approved for heart failure in five years. Data from a major study



**Heart failure patients now have an additional treatment option.**

showed that Diovan improved survival rates among heart failure patients who did not take ACE inhibitors—and cut their risk of being hospitalized for this disease by more than half.

Diovan is a type of drug known as an angiotensin II receptor blocker (ARB). In patients with heart failure, concomitant use of Diovan, an ACE inhibitor and a beta blocker is not recommended. In the Valsartan Heart Failure Trial, this triple combination was associated with an unfavorable heart failure outcome. All ARBs and ACE inhibitors carry a warning that these drugs should not be used in pregnant women due to the risk of injury and even death to the fetus. Because of the risk of hypotension, caution should be observed when initiating therapy in heart failure patients.

If you have questions or for full prescribing information, visit [www.pharma.us.novartis.com](http://www.pharma.us.novartis.com), or call 1-888-NOW-NOVA (1-888-669-6682).