

Health Awareness

New Icon Cuts Through The Clutter To Increase Awareness Of Thyroid Disorders

(NAPSA)—There's a new health icon in town and learning more about what it stands for could help millions of Americans live a healthier life.

That blue paisley icon represents Thyroid Awareness.

As many as 30 million Americans may be affected by thyroid disorders, although more than half remain undiagnosed, say experts at the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists.

The thyroid gland, or simply the thyroid, is one of the largest endocrine glands in the body. Found in the neck, it controls how quickly the body makes energy, makes proteins and processes other hormones. If your thyroid isn't working properly, neither are you. But many people are not sure where their thyroid is or what symptoms might indicate a problem.

Here are some facts you should know:

- Thyroid cancer is one of the fastest-growing cancers in America and can be one of the most curable. The most common sign of thyroid cancer is a lump.

- Thyroid disorders tend to run in families and are most common among women.

- Hyperthyroidism, or an overactive thyroid, develops when the body is exposed to excessive amounts of thyroid hormone. It occurs in almost 1 percent of all Americans and in its mildest form may not cause recognizable symptoms.

- An underactive thyroid, or hypothyroidism, occurs when the thyroid gland produces less than the normal amount of thyroid hor-



Many people do not realize the amount of research behind the development of commemorative icons, such as the blue paisley ribbon for thyroid awareness (www.ThyroidAwareness.com).

mony. The result is the “slowing down” of many bodily functions.

Thyroid Symptoms

How do you know if you have a thyroid disorder? While fatigue is the most common symptom, others include:

- Fast or irregular heart rate
- Anxiety or irritability
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Intolerance of warm or cold temperatures
- Muscle weakness.

There is a simple neck check you can perform at home. You can find out more at www.ThyroidAwareness.com and (904) 353-7878.

Chosen for its attractive pattern, the paisley is often found in items tied around the neck, such as neckties and scarves, where the thyroid is found. In fact, the curved shapes within the icon seem to mimic thyroid nodules.



Note to Editors: January is Thyroid Awareness Month.