



Health Awareness

New Treatment Option Available For People Living With Relapsing Forms of Multiple Sclerosis

(NAPSA)—Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a debilitating disease affecting more than 350,000 people in the U.S.

Now people with the most common forms of the disease, relapsing MS, have a new therapeutic option called Rebif® (recombinant interferon beta-1a). In the treatment of relapsing forms of MS, Rebif decreases the frequency of relapses and delays the accumulation of physical disability. Patients seeking more information about Rebif may call MSLifeLines at 1-877-44-REBIF. Information is also available online at www.rebif.com.

“The approval of Rebif is good news for people with multiple sclerosis in the U.S.,” said Patricia Coyle, MD, Stony Brook University Hospital. “Physicians are now free to prescribe Rebif to patients in the U.S. who have relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis.”

The approval was based upon the results of two large multi-center studies in patients with relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis. The data collected from these trials, along with years of experience with Rebif outside of the U.S., show that the therapy provides significant treatment benefits for people with relapsing forms of MS. Rebif was able to gain



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approval under the terms of the Orphan Drug Act by demonstrating clinical superiority versus Avonex®, another MS treatment, based on a reduction in relapses at 24 weeks in a trial that directly compared the two treatments. Specifically, data show that approximately 75% of patients who received Rebif did not have a relapse, compared to 63% of patients in the study who received Avonex. This reflects a 32% relative reduction in the proportion of Rebif patients who experienced relapses during the study period.

Most commonly reported side effects associated with Rebif are injection site disorders, flu-like symptoms, abdominal pain, depression, elevation of liver enzymes and blood

cell abnormalities. Rebif is contraindicated in patients with hypersensitivity to natural or recombinant interferon, human albumin, or any other component of the formulation. Caution is advised in patients with depression, pre-existing seizure disorders, liver disease, alcohol abuse or elevated liver enzyme levels. Women who are or are planning to become pregnant should not take Rebif without consulting their doctor. Anaphylaxis has been reported as a rare complication of Rebif.

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, inflammatory condition of the central nervous system and the most common non-traumatic disease of the central nervous system in young adults. The disease usually begins to show symptoms in people between 20 and 40 years of age, and is twice as common in women than men. While symptoms can vary by individual, common symptoms include: blurred vision, numbness and tingling in the limbs and problems with strength and coordination.

Currently there is no cure for MS, but there are treatment options, such as Rebif, available that can delay the accumulation of physical disability associated with the disease. Rebif is marketed by Sero, Inc.