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Merck Significantly Expands its Patient Assistance Program Offerings to Provide Access to More Medicines for People in Need

Survey shows more than one third of uninsured, unemployed Americans have skipped or incorrectly taken their prescribed medications to save money, yet many may qualify for free medicine

WHITEHOUSE STATION, N.J., September 22, 2010 – Today, Merck announced that it has significantly expanded the number of Merck medicines available through its Merck Helps™ patient assistance programs, which include the Merck Patient Assistance Program, the Merck Vaccine Patient Assistance Program, the ACT Program for Oncology and Hepatitis C medicines, and the SUPPORT® Program for HIV/AIDS medicines. The Merck Helps programs provide Merck medicines and vaccines free of charge to eligible individuals, primarily the uninsured, who earn up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level who, without assistance, cannot afford needed Merck medicines.

To help increase awareness of all patient assistance programs, the Merck Company Foundation has provided a grant to NeedyMeds, a nonprofit organization with a mission to help people who cannot afford medicine or healthcare costs by making information about these programs available at no cost. NeedyMeds will be using the grant to translate its website into Spanish as well as working closely with various healthcare clinics to increase knowledge of and access to patient assistance programs.

“Merck has historically recognized the critical need for people to have access to the prescription medicines and vaccines they require, even if they lose their insurance,” said Michael Rosenblatt, M.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer at Merck. “Our patient assistance programs now provide access to even more medicines for chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure, allowing us to reach more people in need.”

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A recent telephone survey of more than 2,000 Americans, conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of Merck¹, found that more than one third (35%) of those who are uninsured and unemployed did not buy or refill medicines they were prescribed, cut their dosage in half, or took expired medicine as a way to save money. Furthermore, while 32 percent of U.S. adults are potentially eligible for patient assistance programs, 79 percent of those who are uninsured and unemployed are somewhat or not at all aware that such programs exist.

"Unfortunately, many patients don't know that there are patient assistance programs available if they can't afford their prescriptions, and the need is great," said Richard Sagall, MD, co-founder of NeedyMeds. "That's why we are pleased to partner with Merck to help further raise awareness of these programs."

"With an uncertain economy and near double-digit unemployment, more patients are struggling to pay for their medicines than ever before," said Emmanuel Durham, director of Community Healthcare Network – Helen B. Atkinson Health Center, New York, NY. "I have seen firsthand how the Merck Helps programs can keep needed medicines in reach."

About Merck Helps

For more than 50 years, Merck has helped millions of patients gain access to medicines for chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure through the Merck Patient Assistance Program. As a global healthcare leader working to help the world be well, Merck provides its medicines and adult vaccines for free to people who do not have prescription drug or health insurance coverage and qualify for a Merck Helps program. Merck Helps programs include:

- The Merck Patient Assistance Program, which helps eligible patients who earn up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level gain access to Merck medicines for chronic conditions like asthma and diabetes.
- The Merck Vaccine Patient Assistance Program, which provides free vaccines to adults over age 19 who do not have health insurance coverage for vaccines and

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¹ This telephone survey was conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of Merck from August 20 to 23, 2010 among 2,012 U.S. adults of whom 549 do not have any prescription drug benefits and 131 do not have any prescription drug benefits and are not employed.

- who earn up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.
- The ACT Program for Oncology and Hepatitis C medicines, which provides free reimbursement support services and refers appropriate patients to a patient assistance program for eligible individuals who earn up to 500 percent of the federal poverty level.
 - The SUPPORT Program for HIV/AIDS, which provides free reimbursement support services and refers appropriate patients to a patient assistance program for eligible individuals who earn up to 500 percent of the federal poverty level.

All Merck Helps programs are confidential and patients may qualify for the Merck Patient Assistance Program and the Merck Vaccine Patient Assistance Program if they have a household income of \$43,320 or less for individuals, \$58,280 or less for couples, or \$88,200 or less for a family of four, even if the financial situation is temporary due to unemployment or other reasons. Patients may qualify for The ACT Program and the SUPPORT Program if they have a household income of \$54,150 or less for individuals, \$72,800 or less for couples, or \$110,250 or less for a family of four. With the Merck Helps programs, there are no application fees, no co-payments and a simple enrollment process. Many medicines can be delivered to a patient's home or doctor's office at no charge. Patients in need of information should visit www.MerckHelps.com or call (800) PAP-5400.

About NeedyMeds

NeedyMeds is a non-profit organization founded in 1997 as a resource for people who need help with the cost of medicine. The mission of NeedyMeds has been, since its inception, to make comprehensive and reliable information about assistance programs available to low-income patients and their advocates at no cost. NeedyMeds' website is visited by over 14,000 people each workday.

About Merck

Today's Merck is a global healthcare leader working to help the world be well. Merck is known as MSD outside the United States and Canada. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies, and consumer care and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to

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deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to healthcare through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. For more information, visit www.merck.com.

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