Rob Lowe Launches Awareness Campaign About One Of The Most Dangerous And Unrecognized Side Effects Of Chemotherapy -- Infections

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NEW YORK, April 22, 2002 - In his work as an advocate for cancer education, actor Rob Lowe has seen the hardship faced by people going through chemotherapy. But these difficulties really hit home when his father, Chuck, developed a serious infection brought on by chemotherapy.

"It was really scary for us,"said Rob. "Although chemotherapy was the miracle that ultimately saved my father's life, there was a side effect that we were unprepared for."

The Lowes are not alone in this experience. For nearly half of newly diagnosed patients, cancer is no longer a deadly disease. This is due in large part to chemotherapy. However, most cancer patients do not know that while chemotherapy destroys their harmful cancer cells, it also destroys their healthy infection-fighting white blood cells, making them vulnerable to infections which may be life-threatening. Infection is one of the most serious side effects of chemotherapy, but is often not discussed with patients. Only one in ten patients receives proactive protection from infection. Instead, most doctors tend to treat these infections only after they occur. There are ways to reduce the risk of infection, but most patients are unaware of treatment options.

Infections during chemotherapy are dangerous because they can force patients to stop their cancer treatment, potentially jeopardizing their chances for success; they can land patients in the hospital which places them at unnecessary risk and discomfort, close to others who carry infection, and away from the support and love of families and friends; hospitalization is costly and very disruptive to cancer patients because today most cancer patients are not hospitalized for cancer therapy. Additionally, even simple infections like bronchitis can become life- threatening. Studies have shown that 30 to 40 percent of patients who are not protected from infection and who are getting certain types of chemotherapy end up developing infections.

"Infection forced my dad to stop his chemotherapy. When he was told that his treatment had to be stopped, he didn't know it was because of infection. He thought it was because the chemo wasn't working and the cancer was winning," said Rob. "Most cancer patients know about hair loss and nausea, but I want to educate patients about the risk of infection so they don't have to go through what my dad did."

Rob has joined forces with biotechnology company Amgen to launch ***By My Side(TM): Taking Charge of Cancer Treatment***, a multi-media education program to raise awareness about infections and other chemotherapy side effects.

By My Side offers a wealth of free information on the "visible" side effects of chemotherapy, such as nausea and hair loss, the "hidden" side effects, such as infection and emotional duress, and provides tips on preventing or managing them. The information is available in a booklet and video by calling toll-free **866-BY-MY-SIDE (866-296-9743)** or by accessing www.ByMySide.com. Future program offerings will include an interactive Web-based mentoring program.

"Patients and their caregivers or families need to ask their doctors for protection from infection right at the very start of their chemotherapy or if they are already going through treatment," said Rob.

The FDA recently approved a new prescription medicine from Amgen called Neulasta(TM) (pegfilgrastim), which boosts the body's own natural infection-fighting white blood cells to help protect patients against infections. It is available for cancer patients for the first time this month.

"There was very little information and nothing available medically to keep my dad from getting an infection when he was going through chemotherapy," said Rob. "Now cancer patients have access to knowledge about chemotherapy side effects and new medical advances like Neulasta to overcome them."

In 1999, Rob became the first male spokesperson for breast cancer awareness, spearheading a fundraising drive that generated over $7 million to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Recently, Rob received the 2002 "Tribute to the Human Spirit" award from cancer advocacy organization, The Wellness Community, for his contributions to educate and inspire cancer patients and their families.

Rob's passion for raising awareness about the plight of cancer patients is so strong it has even found its way into a recent episode of "The West Wing," where Rob plays deputy communications director, Sam Seaborn. In the episode, Seaborn writes a heartfelt addition to President Bartlett's State of the Union address announcing a goal for the country to cure cancer in the next decade.

Rob has received an Emmy nomination, two Golden Globe nominations and has won the Screen Actor's Guild's Best Ensemble award two years in a row. He made his movie debut in 1983 in Francis Ford Coppola's "The Outsiders." He has starred in numerous movies including "St. Elmo's Fire," "About Last Night," "Bad Influence," "Wayne's World," "Tommy Boy" and "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me." He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two sons.

Neulasta is prescribed to reduce the risk of infection (initially marked by fever) in patients with some tumors receiving chemotherapy that may decrease the number of infection-fighting white blood cells.

Neulasta is safe and well-tolerated. In clinical studies, the most common adverse event attributed to Neulasta therapy following combination chemotherapy in patients (n=465) with lymphoma and solid tumors was bone pain reported in 26 percent of patients. In most cases, bone pain was controlled with non-narcotic analgesics. The most serious adverse event not attributed to the underlying disease or chemotherapy was a single case of low oxygen in the blood. While not reported in patients receiving Neulasta, rare events of adult respiratory distress syndrome, splenic rupture, and sickle cell crisis have been reported in patients receiving the parent compound, NEUPOGEN(R) (Filgrastim).

Amgen is a global biotechnology company that discovers, develops, manufactures and markets important human therapeutics based on advances in cellular and molecular biology.

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EDITOR'S NOTES:

- Anyone can call **866-BY-MY-SIDE (866-296-9743)** or access www.ByMySide.com for free information and materials.
- Pictures of Rob and his Dad are available by calling Rebecca Hamm, 805-447-3872.
- An electronic version of this news release may be accessed via www.amgen.com.
- The Neulasta(TM) prescribing information is available at http://www.NEULASTA.com or via fax by calling 800-772-6436.
- Consumers can call **866-611-DRUG (3784)** or access http://www.NEULASTA.com for more information about Neulasta.