



Deborah Norville Launches National Hope Relay in Celebration of People Leading Active Lives Despite their Rheumatoid Arthritis

May 28, 2003

NEW YORK, May 28 /PRNewswire/ -- Emmy Award-winning broadcast journalist Deborah Norville spends more time thinking about her late mother Merle every May, not just during Mother's Day but during all of National Arthritis Awareness Month. This May, Norville, whose mother died from complications of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) when Norville was just 20 years old, joins forces with the Hope Relay, a national program celebrating the achievements of women and men making strides against their disease. She hopes to educate the public about RA and the need for early diagnosis and treatment.

"I was inspired to lend my voice to the Hope Relay because I saw firsthand the terrible pain and disability RA caused my mother during the prime of her life," said Norville. "My mom was diagnosed with RA when I was ten years old, and her disease completely changed our family dynamics. My sisters and I became responsible for most of the household chores, cooking, cleaning and grocery shopping because my mother couldn't always do those things. She gave advice and instruction, but she often couldn't physically join in."

Today, targeted medicines like ENBREL(R) (etanercept) a biologic therapy that works with the body's immune system, are offering hope to many people with RA, such as those participating in the Hope Relay. ENBREL can help reduce the pain, swelling, fatigue and other symptoms of RA and can help slow down the progression of joint damage.

Diagnosed in 1978 at age 44, Merle Norville was treated with steroids and pain relievers, the typical medications prescribed at the time. "Over the course of ten years, RA changed my mother from an active, involved woman to someone who was confined to a wheelchair and eventually bedridden," said Norville. "Sometimes the strength in her hands was so limited that she couldn't open her own pill bottles."

The Hope Relay is a cross-country event connecting RA patients through athletic activities -- such as biking, running, or walking -- to highlight the dramatic effects treatment can have on daily life. All have overcome significant symptoms that led to some degree of disability, and today are able to participate in activities they could not have completed previously. Their personal stories underscore the impact of living with this disease and the benefits appropriate, aggressive treatment can have on leading active, vibrant lives.

The athletes range in age from 32 years to 60 years old, and include a California home-maker who, after surgery to repair joint damage, was told she might never run again; a Texas rancher, who at one time could not wear boots due to swelling in her legs and feet; a Pennsylvania human resources manager once confined to a wheelchair; and a New York area sheriff's officer who, because of swollen fingers, needed help buttoning his own shirt.

"Rheumatoid arthritis was slowly robbing me of my lifestyle," said Darla Gore, a Dallas-area resident who has lived with RA for nearly ten years. "At one point, my pain was so severe that I couldn't tuck in my own shirt or drive my car. ENBREL has helped me regain mobility to the extent that I'll be riding my horse five miles in the Hope Relay."

"These are courageous people who refused to give up or give in to their disease," said Norville. "The Hope Relay sends an invaluable message to other RA patients and their families about how important it is to take control of their lives by seeking out appropriate treatments. People with RA can now live active, more vibrant lives than ever thought possible."

Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic and progressive autoimmune disease that causes the body's immune system to mistakenly attack its joints and surrounding soft tissue. More than two million Americans have RA, and it is three times more likely to strike women than men.

The Hope Relay will kick off in New York and progress across the country from east to west, ending in San Diego. The Hope Relay cities and event dates are listed below:

* New York	Wednesday, May 28
* Baltimore	Thursday, May 29
* Detroit	Friday, May 30
* Atlanta	Saturday, May 31
* Chicago	Tuesday, June 3
* Dallas	Wednesday, June 4
* Denver	Thursday, June 5
* Phoenix	Friday, June 6
* Seattle	Saturday, June 7
* San Diego	Sunday, June 8

Deborah Norville, a veteran journalist and two-time Emmy Award winner, currently anchors "Inside Edition" the country's top rated syndicated news program. Norville rose to national prominence as co-host of NBC's "Today Show" and also served as a correspondent for "48 Hours" and "Street Stories" and an occasional anchor for the "CBS Evening News." She recounts her professional journeys with grace and insight in her best selling book "Back On Track: How To Straighten Out Your Life When It Throws You A Curve."

Amgen and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, the sponsors of the Hope Relay and co-marketers of ENBREL, are making a charitable donation in name and honor of the Hope Relay participants to the Arthritis Foundation and National Psoriasis Foundation to support future arthritis related events.

ABOUT ENBREL

ENBREL is the only fully human anti-TNF receptor approved for use to reduce the signs and symptoms of active arthritis in patients with psoriatic arthritis, and to reduce the signs and symptoms and inhibit the progression of structural damage in patients with moderately to severely active RA.

ENBREL is the only biologic therapy approved to treat newly diagnosed RA patients, and can be used alone. It is also approved to reduce the signs and symptoms of moderately to severely active polyarticular-course juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA) in patients who have had an inadequate response to disease-modifying medicines.

Physicians have become familiar with the benefits and proven long-term tolerability profile of ENBREL. It has been used to treat over 150,000 patients worldwide across all indications since becoming commercially available five years ago, making it one of the fastest-growing prescription products ever launched.

ENBREL acts by binding TNF, one of the dominant inflammatory cytokines or regulatory proteins that play an important role in both normal immune function and the cascade of reactions that causes the inflammatory process of psoriatic arthritis and RA. The binding of ENBREL to TNF renders the bound TNF biologically inactive, resulting in significant reduction in inflammatory activity.

Individual results may vary. In medical studies, ENBREL worked for about two out of three adults with RA. ENBREL has been shown to begin working in as few as two weeks with most patients receiving maximum benefit within three months.

Important Treatment Considerations

SINCE THE PRODUCT WAS FIRST INTRODUCED, SERIOUS INFECTIONS, SOME INVOLVING DEATH, HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN PATIENTS USING ENBREL. MANY OF THESE INFECTIONS OCCURRED IN PATIENTS WHO WERE PRONE TO INFECTIONS, SUCH AS THOSE WITH ADVANCED OR POORLY CONTROLLED DIABETES. RARE CASES OF TUBERCULOSIS HAVE ALSO BEEN REPORTED. ENBREL SHOULD BE DISCONTINUED IN PATIENTS WITH SERIOUS INFECTIONS. DO NOT START ENBREL IF YOU HAVE AN INFECTION OF ANY TYPE OR IF YOU HAVE AN ALLERGY TO ENBREL OR ITS COMPONENTS. ENBREL SHOULD BE USED WITH CAUTION IN PATIENTS PRONE TO INFECTION. CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ENBREL OR INFECTIONS.

There have been reports of serious nervous system disorders such as multiple sclerosis, seizures, or inflammation of the nerves of the eyes. Tell your doctor if you have ever had any of these disorders or if you develop them after starting ENBREL. There have also been rare reports of serious blood disorders, some involving death. Contact your doctor immediately if you develop symptoms such as persistent fever, bruising, bleeding, or paleness. It is unclear if ENBREL has caused these nervous system or blood disorders. If your doctor confirms serious blood problems, you may need to stop using ENBREL.

The most frequent adverse events in placebo-controlled RA clinical trials involving 349 adults were injection site reactions (ISR) (37%), infections (35%), and headache (17%). Only the rate of ISR was higher than that of placebo. The most frequent adverse events in a methotrexate-controlled clinical trial of 415 adults with early-stage RA were infections (64%), ISR (34%), and headache (24%). Of these, only the rate of ISR was higher than that of methotrexate. Patients have been observed in clinical trials for over 3 years. The incidence of malignancies has not increased with extended exposure to ENBREL and is similar to the projected background rate.

Adverse events in the psoriatic arthritis trial were similar to those reported in RA clinical trials.

In a study of 69 patients with JRA, infections (62%), headache (19%), abdominal pain (19%), vomiting (13%), and nausea (9%) occurred more frequently than in adults. The types of infections reported in JRA patients were generally mild and consistent with those commonly seen in children. Serious adverse reactions reported rarely were chicken pox (3%), gastroenteritis (3%), serious infection (2%), depression/personality disorder (1%), skin ulcer (1%), inflammation in parts of the upper digestive tract (1%), and diabetes (1%).

Amgen and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, a division of Wyeth, market ENBREL in North America. Other Wyeth affiliates market ENBREL outside of North America. Immunex Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Amgen, manufactures ENBREL. Additional information about ENBREL, including full Prescribing Information, can be found on the Web site sponsored by the companies at www.enbrel.com or by calling toll free 888-4ENBREL (888-436-2735).

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

Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, a division of Wyeth, has leading products in the areas of women's health care, cardiovascular disease, central nervous system, inflammation, hemophilia, oncology and vaccines. Wyeth (NYSE:WYE) is one of the world's largest research-driven pharmaceutical and health care products companies. It is a leader in the discovery, development, manufacturing and marketing of pharmaceuticals, vaccines, biotechnology products and nonprescription medicines that improve the quality of life for people worldwide. The Company's major divisions include Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Wyeth Consumer Healthcare and Fort Dodge Animal Health.

Editor's Notes

* For more information about the Hope Relay or to request an interview with a Hope Relay participant or with Deborah Norville contact: Audra Berman 212-593-5851.

* For more information about rheumatoid arthritis or the Hope Relay, please visit www.hoperelay.com or call 1-800-344-9729.

* Consumers can call 1-888-436-2735 or visit www.enbrel.com for more information about ENBREL.

Source: Amgen; Wyeth Pharmaceuticals

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