



News Release

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**Andie MacDowell and 17th U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona Introduce
Time to Talk CARDIO, An Innovative Program That Encourages People to
Take Control of Their Heart Health**

*National Research on Patient-Provider Dialogue Showed Improvement in Select
Communication Skills*

(February 17, 2010) New York, NY – Award-winning actress and heart health advocate, Andie MacDowell, and Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, 17th Surgeon General of the United States (2002-2006), have partnered to highlight the importance of effective communication between patients and health care professionals (HCPs) by introducing an innovative program: ***Time to Talk CARDIO*** – **Creating A Real Dialogue In the Office**. Time to Talk CARDIO is designed to help patients and health care professionals have more productive conversations about heart health. The program, piloted by select physician practices and evaluated through in-clinic testing, has shown positive results for both patients and HCPs. To learn more about Time to Talk CARDIO, an educational program underwritten by Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals and developed in partnership with the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Foundation, Canyon Ranch Institute (CRI) and RIASWorks, visit www.timetotalkcardio.com.

“Two priorities of my service as Surgeon General of the United States and of my life’s work are to increase the attention and effort focused on preventing disease and to improve the health literacy of all people,” said Dr. Carmona. “While we’ve made great progress in the prevention and management of cardiovascular disease, many patients fail to experience the full benefit from their treatment plans for a variety of reasons. Time to Talk CARDIO was created to help improve the communication between patients and health care professionals.”

There is strong evidence showing that empowered patient-provider communication offers many benefits for patients, including increased understanding, satisfaction and may improve health outcomes. The need for better dialogue is particularly important when discussing cardiovascular disease, which causes more than 870,000 deaths in the United States each year, and along with stroke, is projected to cost \$503.2 billion in 2010.

“After losing my mother to a heart attack, I realized how important it is to take an active role in your health,” Ms. MacDowell said. “Since cardiovascular disease affects so many lives, it is crucial that people communicate effectively with their health care professional. Time to Talk CARDIO is a great tool that may help address these issues.”

Piloted in 2009 by AAFP practices in Missouri, North Carolina and Mississippi, initial research among 144 patients showed that the Time to Talk CARDIO program significantly increased overall use of communication skills and improved overall satisfaction with medical visits. Likewise, preliminary testing with 24 health care professionals also reported a significant increase in overall communication skill use and statistically significant improvement in overall satisfaction with visit communication. In separate research conducted with 100 patients at the Oregon Health & Science University in conjunction with CRI, results found a significant improvement in several dimensions of effective patient-provider communication and satisfaction, however; they did not show a statistically significant overall change. The program is currently being used in health care settings across the United States, and several physician practices are continuing to assess Time to Talk CARDIO in 2010.

“Time to Talk CARDIO could prove to be a helpful tool in improving physician-patient dialogue,” said Randell Wexler, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.F.P. assistant professor of clinical family medicine at The Ohio State University and Time to Talk CARDIO Advisory Board member. “It provides health care professionals a no cost, high quality way to improve their communication with patients and the care of cardiovascular disease.”

A key component of Time to Talk CARDIO is a free, online, communication skill-building tool that features more than 550 videos demonstrating methods to help make the most of the limited time in a medical visit. The Time to Talk CARDIO program also offers free educational resources to patients, HCPs and organizations focused on building communication skills, including patient and provider brochures.

“Millions of Americans live with at least one heart condition,” Dr. Carmona said. “Time to Talk CARDIO focuses on the skills patients and health care professionals need to have a real dialogue in the office about heart health. Based on the results of initial research we have conducted, we believe Time to Talk CARDIO may make an important difference in how patients and health care professionals talk about heart health.”

About Time to Talk CARDIO

Time to Talk CARDIO is an educational program underwritten by Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals. The program, developed in partnership with the AAFP Foundation, CRI and RIASWorks, is dedicated to advancing cardiovascular health by helping to improve the dialogue between patients and health care professionals. The Time to Talk CARDIO tool was modeled

after LEAPS, a framework developed by Debra Roter, Dr.P.H., M.P.H. of RIASWorks, to assist health care professionals and patients in improving their in-clinic conversations. LEAPS addresses five key areas: Listen, Educate, Assess, Partner and Support. The Time to Talk CARDIO program also offers many free cardiovascular-focused educational resources, including patient and health care provider brochures, posters and goal setting work sheets. Materials are available free to download or order from the Time to Talk CARDIO web site at www.timetotalkcardio.com.

About the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Foundation advances the values of Family Medicine by promoting humanitarian, educational, and scientific initiatives that improve the health of all people. The AAFP Foundation serves as the philanthropic arm of the American Academy of Family Physicians, which is one of the largest national medical organizations, representing more than 94,600 family physicians, family medicine residents, and medical students nationwide. Thanks to funding from physician members and corporate partners, the AAFP Foundation supports good work that makes a difference at home and around the world.

About Canyon Ranch Institute

Canyon Ranch Institute (CRI) catalyzes the possibility of optimal health *for all people* by translating the best practices of Canyon Ranch and its partners to help educate, inspire, and empower every person to prevent disease and embrace a life of wellness. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, CRI collaborates with partners to improve health literacy, prevent disease, and eliminate health disparities. CRI President Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, 17th Surgeon General of the United States (2002-2006), is chair of the Time to Talk CARDIO Advisory Board, and CRI Executive Director Jennifer Cabe, M.A., serves on the Time to Talk CARDIO Advisory Board. CRI Health Literacy and Communication Director Andrew Pleasant, Ph.D., coordinated the in-clinic research to assess the impact of the Time to Talk CARDIO skill-building tool and resources among patients and health care professionals.

About RIASWorks

RIASWorks was established in 2008 to contribute to the science of interpersonal communication in order to enhance health care quality, well being and health. The company supports research and professional education, quality assurance, and excellence in clinical practice through the provision of coding services and training in the use of the Roter Interaction Analysis System (RIAS) and the development and dissemination of evidence-based medical communication tools.

About Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals

Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals is a joint venture between Merck & Co., Inc., and Schering-Plough Corporation. The collaboration includes worldwide markets (excluding Japan).