



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Nicole Franklin, Porter Novelli
(212) 601-8321
nicole.franklin@porternovelli.com

New Time to Talk CARDIO Program Aims to Improve Conversations for Better Heart Health

Unique Communication Skill-Building Tool Launched in Mississippi Where Heart Disease is the Leading Cause of Death

(July 20, 2009) Destin, Fla. – Time to Talk CARDIO - Creating A Real Dialogue In the Office, a new program to help patients and health care professionals make the most of their conversations by building communication skills to better manage heart health, was presented this weekend at the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians Annual Scientific Assembly in Destin, Florida. A key component of Time to Talk CARDIO is a free, cardiovascular, communication skill-building tool for patients and health care professionals featuring more than 550 videos demonstrating methods for more productive medical visits in a limited time frame. 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.

Every year cardiovascular disease causes more than 600,000 deaths in the United States and more than 8,000 deaths in Mississippi. While great progress has been made in the prevention and management of cardiovascular disease, many patients fail to experience full benefit from their treatment plans for a variety of factors. Fortunately, the strategic use of targeted communication approaches that foster an effective working partnership between patients and health care professionals may help improve management and control of cardiovascular disease. Time to Talk CARDIO is a program designed to help patients and health care professionals make the most of their conversations.

"As a nation we must continue to innovate in order to improve the health of all Americans," said Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, president of Canyon Ranch Institute and 17th Surgeon General of the United States (2002-2006). "We hope that the new Time to Talk CARDIO program will advance health literacy about prevention and management

of heart disease. I look forward to the day when we might also apply the lessons we learn from Time to Talk CARDIO to help prevent and manage other chronic diseases.”

Research shows that skilled communication may help physicians have greater professional satisfaction, and studies have found that patient recall of instructions, satisfaction with care, adherence to medical recommendations and appointment-keeping are consistently related to communication skills. Time to Talk CARDIO was designed specifically for patients and health care professionals to address key issues related to cardiovascular disease management.

“Since cardiovascular disease is the number one killer in Mississippi and one of the biggest concerns for our patients, we are thrilled that Time to Talk CARDIO is choosing our state as a location to implement this unique tool,” said Beth Embry, executive director of the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians. Dr. Jason Dees, a family physician based in New Albany, Miss. who is piloting the Time to Talk CARDIO tool, added, “My colleagues and I are continually looking for innovative methods and programs that improve the way we practice medicine. Time to Talk CARDIO allows the health care team to focus on building an active partnership, which could ultimately improve health outcomes.”

The Time to Talk CARDIO program will continue to roll out in additional states throughout the United States in the coming months, and a national launch is planned in fall 2009. The Time to Talk CARDIO program is currently being studied by family physician pilot practices selected by the AAFP Foundation, and CRI is coordinating in-clinic research to assess the impact of the skill-building tool and resources among patients and health care professionals. To further expand the outreach and dissemination of the program to patients and health care professionals, Time to Talk CARDIO is working to develop a national network of health care organizations, patient advocacy groups and professional societies collaborating to promote awareness and solutions around communication and cardiovascular disease management. Organizations and health care professionals who are interested in joining the Time to Talk CARDIO Network can find more information at www.timetotalkcardio.com.

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., is coordinating 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).