

For Immediate Release

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN FIONA MA, OVER 300 NEUROPATHY PATIENTS, DOCTORS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS GATHER IN SACRAMENTO TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF NEUROPATHIC PAIN AND IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR NEUROPATHY PATIENTS

Assemblywoman Ma Named “Legislator of the Year” at 5th Annual Neuropathy Action Awareness Day

SACRAMENTO (June 28, 2011) – The Neuropathy Action Foundation (NAF), a non-profit advocacy organization that provides neuropathy patients with medical resources necessary to improve their quality of life, recently hosted its fifth annual “Neuropathy Action Awareness Day” in Sacramento. The event brought together hundreds of patients and caregivers from across the country to access the latest medical news on neuropathy from experts in the field.

At the conference, the Neuropathy Action Foundation presented Assemblywoman Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco) with its “Legislator of the Year” Award for her advocacy on behalf of patients living with neuropathy and other chronic and life-threatening conditions. In 2011, Assemblywoman Ma introduced AB 310, a bill that would protect those living with neuropathy and all Californians from discriminatory price increases on vital medications.

[“Specialty tiers dramatically increase the cost of vital medications, discriminate against the most vulnerable California patient populations, and jeopardize the health of Californians by placing the cost of medications beyond reach,” said Assemblywoman Ma. “AB 310 is common-sense patient protection legislation that will help ensure that no Californian ever has to choose between taking life-sustaining medication or paying rent and providing food for his or her children.”]

In addition to the presentation of the Legislator of the Year Award, highlights of the 5th annual Neuropathy Action Awareness Day included:

- **Dr. Jonathan Katz**, Chief, Neuromuscular Services at California Pacific Medical Center, who spoke about the impact on patients of insurance protocols such as prior authorization, step therapy and specialty tiers, as well as the ways in which these practice delay treatment and interfere with the physician-patient relationship;
- **Dr. Sean Mackey**, Chief, Division of Pain Management at Stanford University, who presented on neuropathic pain and pain treatments;

- **Dominick Spatafora**, President, Neuropathy Action Foundation, who presented on the impact of specialty tiers and coinsurance as well as the importance of protecting patient access to care.

As part of Neuropathy Action Awareness Day, physicians, medical professionals, government officials and patients provided attendees with information on cutting-edge treatments, understanding your healthcare rights, and how to appeal decisions by health insurers that deny access to treatments that alleviate neuropathic pain.

“It is more critical than ever that the estimated 20 million neuropathy sufferers in the United States work with health care providers and elected officials to protect and enhance access to life-sustaining and life-saving treatments,” said NAF President Dominick Spatafora. “Neuropathy Action Awareness Day provides patients and providers with an active forum to share information, to empower themselves to be effective advocates, and to improve the quality of life of neuropathy patients.”

Neuropathy is a condition that results when nerves that connect to the brain and spinal cord from the rest of the body are damaged or diseased. There are more than 100 kinds of peripheral nerve disorders. They can affect one nerve or many nerves. This includes injury of nerves to muscles (motor nerves), nerves from the skin (sensory nerves), and/or nerves to the gut and other internal organs (autonomic nerves).

About the Neuropathy Action Foundation

The Neuropathy Action Foundation (NAF), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is dedicated to ensuring neuropathy patients obtain the necessary resources, information and tools to access individualized treatment to improve their quality of life. The NAF increases awareness among physicians, the general public and public policy officials that neuropathy can potentially be a serious, widespread and disabling condition, which may be treatable when appropriate medical care is provided. www.neuropathyaction.org

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