



Contact: David Balekdjian, Partner
The Bruckner Group, Inc.
781-245-4454, x222

Hepatitis C Leadership Summit Engages HCV Stakeholders to Elevate the Response to the HCV Epidemic

New Opportunities For Action With Currently-Available Resources

Boston, MA, November 30, 2005. An estimated 4 million Americans have been infected by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Because no significant new federal resources to fight the HCV epidemic are planned for the near future, improving on the current response requires creative and coordinated leveraging of available assets. The first annual Hepatitis C Leadership Summit (HCVLS) was convened on October 29-30, 2005 in Boston, to explore actionable opportunities to elevate the response to the HCV epidemic using currently identifiable resources.

Though there are certainly a wide array of issues that need attention, the HCVLS explored three specific areas of opportunity:

1. **Engaging healthcare insurers**, both private and public, on the opportunities available to cost-effectively respond to the HCV epidemic. Because inaction in the face of the epidemic will be vastly more expensive for insurers, a dialogue at the HCVLS engaged insurers in elevating HCV as a priority. Insurers can act as a primary motivator for the identification and treatment of those with hepatitis C, dramatically affecting the current response.
2. **Producing better treatment results through a dissemination of physician best practices and care options** for a broad array of patient types. The HCVLS also discussed the incorporation of adjunctive nutritional therapies to improve treatment compliance and outcomes, and the use of complementary therapies in conjunction with interferon or as an alternative.
3. **Engaging community faith organizations** to increase HCV awareness (and thus testing and identification of HCV patients), and to provide support for those patients who have HCV whether or not they are receiving therapy.

“Based upon the feedback from participants, it’s clear the HCVLS brought forth both new ideas and new opportunities for action,” said Michael J. Russo, Partner at The Bruckner Group (BGI), and developer of the HCVLS concept. “There are a number of

specific initiatives and new avenues to explore that are emerging from the HCVLS, and both the HARCP and BGI intend to follow through on them to the best of our abilities.”

Attendees at the HCVLS included the majority of the State Hepatitis C coordinators, managed care payers, state Medicaid organizations, the CDC, academic and private practice clinicians, advocates, and pharmaceutical and biotechnology manufacturers. Senator Edward Kennedy (MA), who has taken the lead for more federal resources to fight the HCV epidemic, introduced the conference with a recorded video message welcoming participants and encouraging cross-stakeholder collaboration to produce heightened results.

The HCVLS, initiated and organized by the Healthcare Advocacy and Research Collaboration Project (HARCP) and The Bruckner Group, was sponsored by Roche Pharmaceuticals and The Bruckner Group, with additional support from Schering-Plough Corporation, Valeant Pharmaceuticals International, and Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

About the HARCP:

The Healthcare Advocacy and Research Collaboration Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving access to, quality of, and delivery of healthcare services, particularly in under-served disease areas and patient populations. The HARCP conducts research studies and projects, develops and disseminates information, and demonstrates leadership in activities and efforts to fight disease. Current HARCP initiatives include activities in hepatitis C, hemophilia, and autoimmune disorders.

About The Bruckner Group:

The Bruckner Group are healthcare strategy and research consultants with a primary focus in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. BGI are the leading experts in value strategy, helping clients define, prove, and leverage the healthcare value of their therapeutics to build successful product launch strategies and post-launch brand strategies. BGI's strategies emerge from an understanding of the intersection of therapeutic outcomes, healthcare value at the standard of care, and a determination of unmet market needs of payers, physicians, and patients. BGI's unique and systematic approach creates market success by maximally addressing the healthcare value needs in therapeutic markets.