

## **For Immediate Release**

---

Contact: Michael Russo, Partner  
The Bruckner Group, Inc.  
781-245-4454, x223  
mrusso@brucknergroupp.com

### **LARGE-SCALE NATIONWIDE STUDY OF HEPATITIS C TREATMENT PATTERNS FINDS NEARLY 30% OF TREATMENT CANDIDATES NOT RECEIVING THERAPY**

**-- Study finds significant variations in treatment patterns and reported outcomes --**

**Boston, MA – May 18, 2004** – The Bruckner Group (BGI), a strategy and research firm for the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, today announced the results of a large-scale nationwide study on hepatitis C treatment patterns conducted with Brooke Army Medical Center. Select findings are being presented today at the Digestive Disease Week conference in New Orleans.

This nationwide study, developed and performed by The Bruckner Group through its non-profit Academic Collaboration Program, was undertaken to understand the diagnostic and clinical practice patterns of gastroenterologists and hepatologists treating hepatitis C patients. 1,002 clinicians from private practices, hospitals, academic research centers, and government hospitals participated in the study, representing a 20% response rate.

Some key findings include:

1. While 71% of all hepatitis C-infected patients are considered by clinicians to be treatment candidates, only 52% of all hepatitis C-infected patients actually initiate therapy.
2. 78% of clinicians offer re-treatment to patients who relapse after initial therapy, and 64% provide re-treatment to previous non-responders.
3. 75% of clinicians discontinue combination therapy at 12 weeks if the early virologic response data indicates failure to achieve a 2 log or greater reduction in viral load.

-- more --

Combination therapy consists of pegylated interferon and ribavirin: Peg-Intron + Rebetol from Schering-Plough, or Pegasys + Copegus from Roche.

4. Patients treated in private practices are more likely to be considered candidates for treatment, and to actually commence therapy.

“This is the first large-scale study—with over 1,000 participating clinicians—of hepatitis C treatment patterns,” Major Sean Hurley, staff gastroenterologist said. “The majority of gastroenterologists follow an acceptable approach to the management of patients with hepatitis C, but we have learned that substantial practice variations do exist. We also see linkages between practice variations and physician-reported patient outcomes.”

“This large study establishes a baseline of practice patterns from which future trials can be developed to enhance side effect management,” said senior author and staff gastroenterologist Dr. (Maj.) Eric Lawitz.

An abstract from the study, “Assessment of Patients Infected with Hepatitis C Among Gastroenterologists in the United States: A National Survey” is being presented today by Dr. Sean Hurley. In the poster session, a second abstract from this study, “Hepatitis C Therapeutic Management Patterns Among Gastroenterologists in the United States: A National Survey,” is also being presented today with co-authors Dr. Eric Lawitz; Michael Russo, Bruckner Group Partner and Managing Director of BGI’s Academic Collaboration Program; Dr. Matthew Hepburn, and Dr. Hurley.

#### **About The Bruckner Group**

The Bruckner Group Inc. (BGI) is a strategy and research firm exclusively for the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and device industries. BGI assists companies with product development and launch strategies, strategic marketing, and market research.

BGI’s Academic Collaboration Program provides non-profit research services through competitive grants to qualified academicians for studies designed to improve the quality and delivery of healthcare

###