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Chronic Pain Costs the American Public \$100 Billion Annually
*Pain Management Initiative Holds Promise for Improved Treatment
and Quality of Life for Chronic Pain Sufferers*

Farmington, CT - April 27, 2004 --- Managed care company, ConnectiCare, has launched “Partners in Pain Management” (PIPM), a new program to improve the treatment and quality of life of patients with chronic pain. The innovative quality improvement program was developed in cooperation with pharmaceutical company Purdue Pharma L.P. and a panel of respected pain management healthcare professionals to help improve treatment of patients who have sub-optimal pain relief.

An estimated 50 million Americans suffer from chronic pain each year. Combined expenses of health care, lost compensation, and litigation associated with chronic pain costs the American public approximately \$100 billion annually¹. The PIPM program will initially focus on improving the care of patients with low back pain and osteoarthritis, two of the most common causes of persistent pain. Medical costs for osteoarthritis patients are approximately twice those of other patients. Direct costs for low back pain alone are estimated to exceed \$33 billion². The indirect costs such as lost productivity and reduced quality of life have significant implications for patients, their families and employers.

“Pain is one of the main reasons for physician office visits,” stated Dr. Kathleen O’Connell, ConnectiCare Medical Director. “We recognize that the inadequate treatment of pain is a widespread problem. Since healthcare costs for patients with unrelieved pain are often twice as high as those of other patients, it is in everyone’s interest to improve the treatment outcomes for these patients.”

¹ National Institutes of Health guidelines: New directions in Pain Research, Sept. 4, 1998.

² Represents 1994 dollars. Frymoyer JW. The economics of spinal disorders in the adult lumbar spine: Principles and Practice. Lippincott-Raven Publishers. 1997.

As part of the program, a panel of pain management experts identified a number of situations that could indicate that patients are receiving sub-optimal treatment of persistent pain. Signs or indicators of sub-optimal pain management include visits to multiple physicians for consultation and treatment, uncoordinated or unsuccessful use of medication, repeated or failed surgeries, and recurrent diagnostic tests and emergency room visits. Once these patients are identified, healthcare practitioners can implement intervention programs to improve their care and quality of life of their patients.

According to Paul Bluestein, M.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of ConnectiCare, “Chronic pain can be one of the most difficult conditions for doctors and patients to manage. It can affect all aspects of a patient’s work and personal life and it is my hope that programs like this -- that aim at providing an appropriate model for pain management -- can improve the quality and effectiveness of the treatment that ConnectiCare members receive.”

“The patient treatment model employed under this program may set a new standard for treating persistent pain in the managed care setting,” said J. David Haddox, D.D.S., M.D., Vice President of Health Policy at Purdue Pharma L.P. “The costs of treating pain will only increase as the population ages, so it is imperative that we develop and utilize treatment programs that can improve patient outcomes in the most cost-effective manner.”

ConnectiCare has garnered numerous awards for its innovative, effective and proactive approaches to the management of chronic health diseases. The PIPM management program joins such distinguished health management protocols as ConnectiCare’s HeartCare program for adults with congestive heart failure, DiabetiCare for adults with diabetes, Birth Expectations for women at risk of pre-term labor, and the BREATHE program for children and adults with asthma.

ConnectiCare is an independent Connecticut-based managed care company serving nearly 270,000 members through its affiliates, ConnectiCare, Inc.; ConnectiCare of Massachusetts, Inc.; ConnectiCare of New York, Inc.; and ConnectiCare Insurance Company, Inc. ConnectiCare, Inc. holds an “Excellent” Accreditation rating from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for its commercial employer group plans. For more information on ConnectiCare visit www.connecticare.com.

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