Stringent Safety Measures, Quality Processes Ensure Virus-Free Plasma Products for Immune Deficiency Patients

Octapharma USA’s Judi Miller Addresses Immune Deficiency Foundation Patient and Family Retreat

COLLEGE CORNER, OH (September 6, 2008) – Many patients with primary immune deficiency disease rely upon plasma-derived products such as intravenous or subcutaneous immune globulin, to prevent infections and keep them healthy. However, many are also concerned that these life-saving products could also cause life-threatening infections.

“Few people will ever forget the tragedy that affected the hemophilia community in the 1980s, when almost 50 percent of those using blood-clotting concentrates became infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis,” said Octapharma USA Vice President of Medical Affairs Judi Miller. “The emergence of new viruses, such as West Nile, avian flu, Ebola; parasitic diseases such as Chagas, and the prion related illness variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (human mad cow disease) has raised new concerns for patients and families of those that use blood and plasma products. There are many misconceptions about where plasma comes from, how it is used in medical products and safety concerns.”

Octapharma USA is a subsidiary of Octapharma, a Swiss-based pharmaceutical company that is the largest privately owned plasma products company in the world. Miller addressed a large gathering at the Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF) Patient and Family Retreat at the Hueston Woods Resort in College Corner. Primary immunodeficiency diseases are a group of relatively rare conditions caused by intrinsic or genetic defects in the immune system. The retreat is part of IDF’s initiative to provide accurate and timely information for the nearly 250,000 Americans diagnosed with primary immunodeficiency diseases.

“We started these weekend retreats 10 years ago because patients and families living with primary immunodeficiency diseases often find it difficult to access care and health information,” said IDF President Marcia Boyle. “The retreat is often the first opportunity a patient or parent has to talk with other patients and parents. They can share experiences, encouragement and understanding with others who have gone through similar situations. For many of our patients, it is also the first opportunity to hear from a specialist who treats these disorders.”

Miller’s presentation was designed to overcome some of the fears that often surround plasma. Plasma is the source of over 1,000 proteins, some of which are used for drug development and therapeutic purposes. Plasma is the portion of blood that remains after red cells, white blood cells and platelets are removed. Plasma proteins perform a variety of functions, including clotting blood, fighting diseases and other critical functions.
These proteins include albumin, clotting factors, and intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG). Octapharma’s core business is the development, production and sale of high quality, virus safe plasma derivatives, including IVIG. In the U.S., Octapharma’s IVIG product, octagam® (immune globulin intravenous [human] 5%), is used to treat disorders of the immune system, and Octapharma’s Albumin (Human) is indicated for the restoration and maintenance of circulating blood volume.

“Plasma products are invaluable for many patients in the U.S. and abroad,” said Miller. “Hundreds, if not thousands of donations of plasma are needed every year to provide therapy for each patient. The tremendous demand for our products is dependent on plasma supply, but first and foremost we need both donors and patients to know that Octapharma is extremely committed to the strongest possible safety and quality measures during both the plasma collection and product manufacturing process.”

**Immune Deficiency Foundation**
The Immune Deficiency Foundation, founded in 1980, is the national non-profit patient organization dedicated to improving the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life of persons with primary immunodeficiency diseases through advocacy, education and research. For more information on IDF, please visit www.primaryimmune.org or call 800-296-4433.

**Octapharma**
Octapharma is the largest privately owned plasma products company in the world. Its core business is the development, production and sale of high quality, virus safe plasma derivatives, including intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG). From its foundation in 1983, the Swiss-based company has grown to employ over 2000 people in 27 countries, including the United States, where Octapharma USA is headquartered in Hoboken, N.J. For more information, please visit www.octapharma.com or call 201-604-1130.

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