



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
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First of Its Kind Program to Deliver Free Prescription Medication to North Carolina's Uninsured to be Announced

WHAT: News conference to announce a pilot program to deliver free prescription medications to the uninsured and underinsured, utilizing North Carolina's free clinic network. The program is a partnership between the NC Association of Free Clinics, CommuniCare, and several pharmaceutical companies, and is expected to provide nearly 1500 prescriptions for more than 500 patients of the three pilot free clinics. The announcement is taking place during Cover the Uninsured week.

WHEN: Thursday, May 1, 2008 – 11:00 a.m.

WHERE: Raleigh Rescue Mission, 314 East Hargett Street, Raleigh, NC, 27611

Speakers include:

- NC Association of Free Clinics Executive Director Mike Darrow
- Lynn Daniell from the Raleigh Rescue Mission
- CommuniCare COO Victoria Hollins
- Representatives from the initial group of pharmaceutical companies providing free prescription medications for this initiative – Abbott, AstraZeneca, Merck, and Novartis

About NC Association of Free Clinics

The North Carolina Association of Free Clinics, founded in 1998, is a private, nonprofit, 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization that conducts advocacy, research, public relations, resource development, training and technical assistance on behalf of its member free clinics and the people they serve. Headquartered in Winston-Salem, the Association - the largest in the nation - received its largest two grants to date for \$10 million each from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, in order to expand and strengthen the free health clinic network across the state. To learn more about the work of the Association, visit www.ncfreeclinics.org or call (336) 251-1111.

About CommuniCare

CommuniCare is an innovative model of non-governmental healthcare intervention serving more than 13,000 patients in 46 South Carolina counties. This safety net of care provides needed medical information, treatment and medications at no cost to the uninsured in our state who do not qualify for Medicaid, Medicare or VA insurance. CommuniCare also operates **Smiles**, five pediatric dental care programs caring for more than 5,000 children from limited income families who would not otherwise have access to oral healthcare. CommuniCare works through a unique network of 2,500 volunteer physicians, 11 pharmaceutical companies, pharmacies and hospitals that donate their services and prescription drugs to approved patients. For more info, visit www.communicare.us.

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About Raleigh Rescue Mission

For over 46 years, Raleigh Rescue Mission has helped hurting and homeless women, children, & men in our community to overcome their circumstances and rebuild their lives. The Mission provides emergency shelter and long-term recovery programs, including: shelter, food, clothing, medical & dental care, GED, educational & life skills classes, vocational training, job skills, addiction recovery, and Christian counseling & discipleship.

Raleigh Rescue Mission is a Christian, interdenominational 501 (c) (3) nonprofit agency and a member in good standing of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions and the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

About Abbott

Each year, **Abbott** donates millions of dollars worth of pharmaceutical, nutrition and medical products to people in need. Abbott makes many of its products available through both company supported and industry sponsored patient assistance programs. Abbott actively participates in a number of industry-wide initiatives to help low-income or uninsured patient's access free, or nearly free, medicines. The Abbott Patient Assistance Program, a physician-based referral program in the United States, offers free Abbott medicines to low-income persons who do not have, or do not qualify for, prescription drug benefits. For more information about Abbott's programs to improve access to health care, visit:

www.abbott.com/citizenship/PAP.

About AstraZeneca

CommuniCare serves as a single point of contact for many working uninsured people in South Carolina to access medicine, medical referrals and pediatric dental services. Through their role as a central pharmacy for many South Carolina clinics, they help ensure patients get the medicines they need. **AstraZeneca** believes that our responsibility as a healthcare company goes beyond making lifesaving medicines. Through our partnership with CommuniCare, we can reach South Carolinians and now North Carolinians that need help accessing or affording our medicine. We are proud to continue our long-standing partnership with CommuniCare and applaud them as they expand their support of the working uninsured in the state of North Carolina with their partnership with the NC Association of Free Clinics.

About Merck

Helping the uninsured continues to be a top priority for Merck. In the past six years, Merck has provided more than 26 million prescriptions valued at more than \$1.7 billion through the Company's patient assistance programs. **At Merck**, we believe that no one should go without the medicines or vaccines they need. That is why the Company provides its medicines and adult vaccines for free or at discounts to people who do not have prescription drug or health insurance coverage and who, without our assistance, cannot afford their Merck medicine and vaccines. This is consistent with Merck's long-held values and traditions of putting patients first.

About Novartis

At Novartis, we put patients first and seek to ensure that all patients, including those who cannot afford treatments have access to our innovative life saving medicines. In 2007, our access-to-medicines programs, valued at USD 937 million, reached 66 million patients globally. Through multilateral institutions and public-private partnerships, we provide free leprosy and tuberculosis treatment and our antimalarial drug Coartem® without profit to patients in the developing world. In the United States, we are committed to providing access to our medications for those most in need through the Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation's Patient Assistance Programs. These programs provide assistance to patients experiencing financial hardship who have no third party insurance coverage for their medicines.

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