



Health Awareness

Gospel Great Byron Cage Raises His Voice To Raise Awareness About Chronic Kidney Disease

(NAPSA)—Gospel culture and its powerful music have the ability to inspire people to take a positive role in nurturing their mind, body and spirit. Now, world-renowned, award-winning gospel artist Byron Cage is using the power of music to lead a new public awareness program—Strength in HarmonySM—to encourage those at risk for chronic kidney disease to recognize warning signs and obtain early medical intervention.

Strength in Harmony is being offered by Ortho Biotech Products, L.P., in partnership with The COSHAR Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization with a focus on health education through faith-based initiatives.

“I am excited to be working with Ortho Biotech and COSHAR on the Strength in Harmony initiative,” said Minister Cage. “I hope to help bring the African-American community together to take action against chronic kidney disease.”

Chronic kidney disease is a progressive condition in which the kidneys are unable to function effectively. Currently, 20 million Americans have kidney disease and another estimated 20 million are at risk. African-Americans are affected disproportionately as they represent 33 percent of patients treated for kidney failure in the U.S., but only 13 percent of the overall population. People at elevated risk include those with diabetes or high blood pressure, and those who have a family history of kidney disease.

The program launched with a kickoff concert at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta. The concert is one of two Strength in Harmony events taking place this year. The second, a free health workshop and concert featuring Minister Cage, will be



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held in November at Ebenezer AME Church in Ft. Washington, Maryland. Additionally, The COSHAR Foundation will distribute chronic kidney disease information to the 8,500 congregations that make up its Health Ministries Network.

“There is a great need for education about chronic kidney disease awareness in the African-American community,” said Sharon Allison-Ottey, M.D., COSHAR’s Director of Health and Community Initiatives. “The combination of spirituality and health awareness is a powerful team to combat this disease. The COSHAR Foundation is committed to assisting churches around the country in focusing health messages and efforts to make an impact on the health disparities in this country.”

Strength in Harmony is also supported by a coalition of organizations, including the American Association of Kidney Patients, American Kidney Fund, the Alliance of Minority Medical Associations and Together Rx AccessSM, which offers a

free prescription savings program for eligible individuals and families who lack prescription drug coverage and are not eligible for Medicare.

Many people do not realize that they have chronic kidney disease, or are at risk for developing it, until they have reached advanced stages of the condition. In fact, results from 37,000 individuals participating in the National Kidney Foundation’s (NKF) Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP) screenings showed that half of the participants, most of whom had risk factors, had chronic kidney disease, but only 2 percent were aware of it.

“Ninety percent of the KEEP participants reported visiting their doctors in the last year yet most were not aware they could be at risk for chronic kidney disease,” reported Dr. Allan Collins, president-elect of the NKF.

This makes it so important that those at high risk for chronic kidney disease learn to recognize early warning signs of the condition, such as anemia. In fact, the KEEP screenings showed that 21 percent of African-American participants with CKD had anemia, a disproportionately higher rate than other races.

Anemia is a potentially debilitating condition that occurs when the body does not have enough red blood cells, which carry oxygen. Symptoms of anemia include feeling tired or weak, shortness of breath, dizziness, decreased ability to concentrate and paleness.

To learn more about chronic kidney disease, anemia and Strength in Harmony, please visit www.StrengthinHarmony.com.

Ortho Biotech Products, L.P., is the marketer of PROCRI[®] (Epoetin alfa).

Note to Editors: PROCRI[®] (Epoetin alfa) is a prescription medication for the treatment of anemia in chronic kidney disease patients who are not on dialysis and is injected by doctors or nurses. PROCRI[®] is not for patients with uncontrolled high blood pressure. High blood pressure has been noted in patients treated with PROCRI[®] and blood pressure should be monitored carefully. Drugs like PROCRI[®] may increase the risk of blood clots and seizures. Loss of response to PROCRI[®] could be a sign of a very rare but serious condition. In studies, the most common side effects were high blood pressure, headache, joint pain and nausea. Please visit www.PROCRI.com for full prescribing information.