First Omega-3 Fatty-Acid Prescription Drug Dramatically Lowers Very High Triglyceride Levels

(NAPSA)—Many Americans regularly consume omega-3 fatty acids in the form of fish or dietary supplements. Now, for the first time, doctors can prescribe a US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved omega-3 fatty acid medication—known as Omacor® (omega-3-acid ethyl esters)—for adults with very high levels of triglycerides, a serious medical condition that affects up to 6 million Americans.

Triglycerides and various types of cholesterol are found in the blood, and abnormal levels of these fatty substances can affect heart health. According to a recent survey conducted by KRC Research Inc., nearly half of Americans are not aware of how triglycerides affect health, and nearly 70 percent have never spoken to their doctor about their triglyceride levels.

The most common causes of high triglyceride levels are obesity and lack of exercise. Other causes may include smoking, excess alcohol intake and diseases such as type 2 diabetes. Less commonly, genetic factors may be involved.

Diet and exercise are the first line of defense against high triglyceride levels, but people with very high levels often need medications. In clinical studies involving patients with very high triglyceride levels, Omacor dramatically reduced triglyceride levels and was very well tolerated. The most common side effects were burping, infection, flu-like symptoms, upset stomach, back pain, rash and changes in taste sensation.

"Very high triglyceride levels can pose a serious health threat to patients," said Christie Ballantyne, M.D., Director of the Center for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, Methodist DeBakey Heart Center, Houston, Texas. "With Omacor, we can effectively lower very high triglyceride levels with the convenience of once-daily dosing and the confidence of a potent, proven omega-3 medication."

Omacor gel capsules contain 90 percent omega-3-acids—available only by prescription. As a result, four capsules per day deliver an effective dose for adult patients. In addition, the FDA-regulated and approved manufacturing process ensures a consistent, therapeutic concentration of omega-3 fatty acids while helping to eliminate concerns about mercury and other environmental toxins.

Dietary supplements such as fish oil capsules typically contain less than 50 percent omega-3 fatty acids, which means up to 20 capsules may be required to deliver a dose equivalent to Omacor. Furthermore, supplements are not evaluated or regulated as prescription drugs by the FDA, so they are not approved for the treatment of specific diseases or medical conditions.

Said Dr. Ballantyne, "As the only FDA-approved prescription omega-3 drug, Omacor ensures that patients with very high triglyceride levels will receive a pure, consistent dose of omega-3 fatty acids under appropriate medical supervision."

For more information, go to www.omacorrx.com.

More Information About Omacor

Omacor is indicated as an adjunct to diet to reduce very high (≥500 mg/dL) triglyceride (TG) levels in adult patients.

Treatment to reduce very high TG levels may result in elevations in non-HDL-C in some individuals. LDL-C levels should be monitored during Omacor therapy. Every attempt should be made to control serum TG levels with appropriate diet, exercise, weight loss in overweight patients and control of any medical problems that may be contributing to the patient's TG abnormalities. Laboratory studies should be performed to ascertain that the patient's TG levels are consistently abnormal before instituting Omacor and to measure the patient's TG levels during Omacor therapy. Omacor therapy should be withdrawn if there is not an adequate response after 2 months of treatment.

Omacor should be used with caution in patients with known sensitivity or allergy to fish. Patients receiving Omacor and anticoagulants should be monitored. See full prescribing information at www.omacorrx.com.