

HEALTH NEWS

Debbie Reynolds Raises Awareness Of Medical Condition Affecting Millions

(NAPSA)—For years, Actress Debbie Reynolds suffered with the symptoms of overactive bladder, too embarrassed to seek help.

Now, Reynolds—best known for her starring role in the classic films *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*—is helping to raise awareness of overactive bladder through “Standing Ovations,” a consumer education campaign.

Reynolds shares her own experience of living with overactive bladder to help shed the embarrassment associated with the condition and encourage others who suffer to seek the proper diagnosis and treatment.

“I encourage anyone who thinks they may have overactive bladder to talk to their doctor because treatment is available. People shouldn't be embarrassed to speak up, I want them to feel empowered to seek help,” said Reynolds.

More than 17 million Americans suffer from overactive bladder (one in 11 adults.) The condition is characterized by urinary frequency, urgency and urinary urge incontinence—the involuntary loss of urine. Symptoms may include a strong, sudden urge to urinate; urinating more than eight times over a 24-hour period (including waking up to urinate two or more times a night); or wetting accidents.

Many assume overactive bladder is a natural part of aging, so they continue to suffer in silence rather than seek diagnosis and treatment.



Debbie Reynolds is earning standing ovations for her work highlighting a common but embarrassing medical condition.

“A common misperception about overactive bladder is that it only affects the elderly,” said Lauri Romanzi, M.D., clinical assistant professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York. “In fact, overactive bladder affects men and women of all ages. Most importantly, it is a medical condition that can be effectively treated.”

Embarrassment is a common barrier to treatment, causing people suffering with symptoms of overactive bladder to withdraw from family, friends and social interaction. Additionally, sufferers may develop coping mechanisms instead of seeking treatment.

“Before receiving treatment, I scheduled my life around my over-

active bladder. As a busy performer, it really slowed me down. Still, I was embarrassed to speak up, so over time I developed ways to cope, like avoiding long car trips, and making sure I knew where the nearest ladies room was located,” said Reynolds.

“Early recognition and treatment of overactive bladder is the key to effectively managing the condition,” said Romanzi.

Treatment for overactive bladder includes prescription medications like DETROL® LA (tolterodine tartrate extended release capsules), which work to help control involuntary contractions of the bladder muscle, the cause of those strong, sudden urges.

Drug therapy is often coupled with behavioral techniques and bladder training, which together help patients regain control over their bladder.

Today, with treatment, Reynolds continues to entertain audiences across the country. In addition to performing live on-stage 40 weeks per year, Reynolds has appeared on the NBC sitcom *Will & Grace*.

She also spends time collecting costumes, props and other mementos for her Hollywood Motion Picture and Television Museum in Los Angeles, expected to open in 2003.

To obtain additional information on “Standing Ovations,” including a brochure and symptom checklist, call toll-free 1-866-338-7651. To learn more about overactive bladder, visit www.overactivebladder.com.