



Gymnast Bart Conner Springs Into Action, Addressing Americans' Concerns About Arthritis

(NAPSA)—Arthritis is the leading cause of disability among Americans over age 15, affecting almost 43 million people in the United States. A Roper Starch survey found that four out of 10 (39 percent) Americans age 35 and up agree that when they think about aging, having arthritis is one of their biggest medical fears.

Many people may experience wear and tear on their joints from recreational activities, like jogging or playing tennis, or from everyday tasks, like walking up and down the stairs. Depending on the amount of activity we undertake, the effects of arthritis can be felt at an early age.

For two-time Olympic gold medal gymnast Bart Conner, it began when, at age 22, after years of training and several surgeries, he was diagnosed with osteoarthritis. For more than 20 years following his diagnosis, Conner tried to put up with the pain, but eventually his arthritis began to impede his everyday life.

Conner spoke with his doctor about treatment options, and found a prescription medication that helped control his arthritis symptoms. He began taking Celebrex® (celecoxib capsules) in 1999, to help manage his arthritis symptoms. He is now able to be more active and engage in normal activities.

Conner's experience led him to join Pharmacia and Pfizer to launch the *B.E.A.T. Arthritis*™ campaign: **Boost Education of Arthritis Treatment**. The campaign aims to increase awareness about arthritis and effective treatments for the condition.

"Many people think arthritis is just a normal part of getting older. It isn't. People need to know that there are treatments to help them manage the pain, inflammation and stiffness of arthritis so they

Tips To Help B.E.A.T. Arthritis

- Pay attention to joint pain signals. Pain is a warning sign that something is not right.
- Talk to your doctor about arthritis, possible treatments and an exercise program that's right for you.
- Call **877-480-BEAT (2328)** for free information about arthritis or visit www.celebrex.com or www.arthritis.com.

can live healthy, active lives," said Conner.

Conner has been on tour with the *B.E.A.T. Arthritis*™ campaign since December 2000, bringing his message of hope to cities around the country. In each city, Conner, paired with a doctor, tries to raise awareness about arthritis by hosting an educational seminar for local residents.

According to Conner's personal physician, Dr. William Grana, Professor and Head, Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Arizona Health Sciences Center, Conner's message is an important one.

"The key to managing arthritis is not to downplay the severity of the disease," said Grana. "People suffering from joint pain need to talk to their physician to find a treatment plan that's right for them."

Celebrex should not be taken in late pregnancy or if you've had aspirin-sensitive asthma or allergic reactions to aspirin or other arthritis medicines or certain drugs called sulfonamides. In rare cases serious stomach problems, such as bleeding, can occur without warning. The most common side effects in clinical trials were indigestion, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Tell your doctor if you have kidney or liver problems.