

For Immediate Release

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National Survey Finds Nearly Half of Public Unaware Prescription Painkiller Abuse is as Harmful as Using Heroin

- *Nearly 40% of Americans know someone who abuses painkillers* –
- *Upcoming Senate Symposium to address opioid dependence medical treatment* –

Richmond, VA (February 1, 2006) – Today, results of a major new national survey of more than 1,500 people provide the first in-depth look at how Americans view opioid addiction – addiction to heroin or prescription opioid painkillers - and its treatments. *Prescription Painkiller/Heroin Addiction and Treatment* reveals roughly half (46%) of the respondents do not understand that prescription opioid painkiller abuse is as harmful as heroin abuse in terms of how it affects the body. The significance of the public's misunderstanding of this danger is underlined by another major survey finding -- nearly 4 in 10 Americans (37%) surveyed know someone personally who has abused opioid painkillers. Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals Inc. sponsored the survey, conducted by Schulman, Ronca, & Bucuvalas, Inc.

Although abuse of prescription opioid painkillers is beginning to be recognized as a significant aspect of drug abuse in America, to date there are no available data on what the public understands about the disease of opioid dependence (i.e., addiction) and its treatment.

“By illustrating what the American public thinks about opioid addiction and its treatment, this survey does a great service to policymakers and healthcare professionals who seek to educate consumers and bring patients into treatment,” said Edwin A. Salsitz, MD, of Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City, and a practicing clinician on addiction and treatment for opioid dependence. “The public is just beginning to understand opioid dependence as a disease. We need to educate consumers about all treatment options, including office-based medical therapy which allows opioid dependence to be treated with the same privacy and discretion that’s given to other chronic diseases like diabetes or high blood pressure.”

Recent government reports show that nearly 4.4 million Americans abuse prescription painkillers and that opioid painkillers are the fastest growing drug of abuse among teenagers.* This new survey underscores the urgency of educating the public that, as a substance of abuse, prescription opioid painkillers are equivalent to heroin. Even though opioid painkillers such as oxycodone or morphine are appropriately prescribed to treat pain, their abuse affects the brain in the same way, and to the same extent, as heroin.

Other significant survey findings include:

- Of those surveyed who know someone abusing opioid painkillers, more than 20% report that the abuser is a co-worker.
- More than half (54%) of those surveyed don't know that opioid addiction is a medical disease, but two-thirds (66%) agree that genetic factors contribute to drug addiction.
- Survey respondents are most familiar with 12-step, abstinence, and hospital-based treatment programs; only 4% volunteered that medical treatment for opioid addiction is available in doctors' offices.
- Over three-quarters (76%) of the population surveyed want access to addiction treatment to be made as easy as possible, and 71% agree that opioid-addicted people should be able to receive treatment in a doctor's private office. Although 71% favor in-office treatment, only 55% are comfortable with their own doctor offering such treatment.
- The public has different racial and demographic stereotypes for people addicted to opioid painkillers compared to those addicted to heroin.

This survey reveals only a basic understanding among respondents of opioid dependence treatment options and virtually no awareness of treating this chronic brain disease in the privacy of a doctor's office.

Patient Attitudes About Opioid Addiction and Treatment

In a related survey, a separate cohort of 57 patients receiving medication for opioid dependence was questioned. Highlights of their responses include:

- The sociodemographic make-up of the patient cohort includes a plurality (57%) who are employed and another 18% who are either homemakers, students, or retired.
- Of the patients surveyed, almost all (96%) abused opioid painkillers, 65% abused heroin, and 61% abused both.
- A small percentage of patients surveyed (16%) think people can stop using opioids if they want to.
- Most patients surveyed (91%) say "cold turkey" is not effective in treating opioid addiction.

Upcoming U.S. Senate Symposium

To address key issues related to the medical treatment of heroin and opioid painkiller dependence, Senators Carl Levin (D-MI) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) will sponsor a Senate Symposium highlighting the success of office-based treatment for opioid dependence using buprenorphine. The date of the Symposium is still to be confirmed.

"The millions of Americans who suffer from opioid dependence deserve access to all available medical treatments," said Senator Carl Levin. "As more physicians become certified to prescribe buprenorphine to treat this devastating disease in their offices rather than a centralized clinic, those afflicted with opioid addiction all across the country will benefit equally from this revolutionary treatment option."

"Just as depression came out of the closet when it was recognized as a treatable brain disease, so should opioid dependence," said Senator Orrin Hatch. "The results we will present at the Senate Symposium underscore the findings of this national attitudinal

survey. Clearly, education is the key to increasing awareness and opening up sufficient in-office medical treatment opportunities to help opioid-dependent people manage their disease discreetly and effectively.”

About the Survey

The target population for *Prescription Painkiller/Heroin Addiction and Treatment* is a national sample of 1,503, aged 18 years and older, living in a non-institutionalized setting in the United States. SRBI researchers contacted US households by random digit dialing (RDD) among a geographically stratified sample of telephone banks with working residential telephone numbers. Within households with more than one adult, the designated respondent was selected by the most recent/next birthday. The survey results of the total national sample have a maximum expected margin of error of +/- 2.5 % at the 95% level of confidence. As part of *Prescription Painkiller/Heroin Addiction and Treatment*, a separate, parallel survey of 57 people being treated with Suboxone® (buprenorphine HCl/naloxone HCl dihydrate) C-III Sublingual Tablets for opioid dependence was conducted. Responses of the 57 interviewed patients provide information about their opinions and experiences as persons under treatment for opioid dependence.

Copies of *Prescription Painkiller/Heroin Addiction and Treatment* are available to download from www.srbi.com/national_survey_on_painkillers.html.

*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). *Overview of Findings from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-27, DHHS Publication No. SMA 05-4061). Rockville, MD, and National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Monitoring the Future Annual Survey: Johnston, L. D. et al.* (December 19, 2005). *Teen drug use down but progress halts among youngest teens*. University of Michigan News and Information Services: Ann Arbor, MI.

About Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. (SRBI)

SRBI is a full-service global strategy and research organization specializing in public policy and opinion surveys, banking and finance, telecommunications, media, energy, transportation, insurance and health care. Clients include major financial institutions, Fortune 500 companies, federal, state and local governments, foundations and universities. SRBI has an established track record of providing high quality, timely and cost effective research and analysis. In addition to its headquarters in New York City, SRBI has offices in Washington D.C., Florida, New Jersey and West Virginia.

About Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals Inc. is a specialty pharmaceutical company that manufactures and markets Suboxone® (buprenorphine HCl/naloxone HCl dihydrate) C-III Sublingual Tablets and Subutex® (buprenorphine HCl) C-III Sublingual Tablets, formulations of buprenorphine used to treat opioid dependence. Suboxone and Subutex are the only controlled products approved by the FDA under the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 for office-based treatment of opioid dependence. Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals Inc. is committed to expanding access to medical therapies for

patients suffering from the chronic, relapsing brain disease of drug dependence. For more information, visit suboxone.com or opioiddependence.com. Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Reckitt Benckiser PLC, a publicly traded UK firm.

Statement of Fair Balance

Intravenous use of buprenorphine, usually in combination with benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants has been associated with significant respiratory depression and death. Suboxone® and Subutex® have potential for abuse and produces dependence of the opioid type with a milder withdrawal syndrome than full agonists. Cytolytic hepatitis and hepatitis with jaundice have been observed in the addicted population receiving buprenorphine. There are no adequate and well-controlled studies of Suboxone or Subutex (a pregnancy category C medication) in pregnancy. Due caution should be exercised when driving cars or operating machinery. The most commonly reported adverse events with Suboxone have included headache (36%, placebo 22%), withdrawal syndrome (25%, placebo 37%), pain (22%, placebo 19%), nausea (15%, placebo 11%), insomnia (14%, placebo 16%), sweating (14%, placebo 10%). See full prescribing information for complete information.

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