World Gastroenterology Organisation Announces 2013 WDHD

Every 29th May, the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) celebrates World Digestive Health Day (WDHD) and initiates a worldwide public health campaign through its more than 100 national society members and regional affiliates which reach over 50,000 members. Each year focuses upon a particular digestive or liver disorder, with the theme for 2013 being “LIVER CANCER. Act Today. Save Your Life Tomorrow. Awareness. Prevention. Detection. Treatment.”

About This Year’s Theme

The goal of the WDHD 2013 campaign is to raise awareness of the growing health crisis of liver cancer and reduce the number of individuals affected by supporting the worldwide fight to bring recognition through education and training concerning this disease. Through a multi-faceted approach, to include local and regional campaigns and conferences, the WDHD 2013 campaign will endeavor to inform healthcare providers and the community at large of the prevalence, risk factors, and causes of liver cancer and to present an evidence-based and patient-centered approach to the prevention, detection and treatment of HCC and its underlying causes. Dr. Douglas R. LaBrecque, MD, FACP, Chairman of the Steering Committee for WDHD 2013, expressed his amazement that “Despite the fact that HCC is the #5 cancer in the world and the #3 cancer killer globally, it has failed to be recognized by the major world health organizations and major philanthropic organizations for the health crisis that it represents. Viral hepatitis B and C cause 85% of HCC and chronically infect 1 in 12 individuals world wide. Every 30 seconds one individual dies in the world from HCC, but no major programs have been focused on attacking and eliminating these dreadful diseases. A major campaign, such as that started effectively to eliminate polio (only 3 countries left with even a single case of polio) and HIV (with only one twentieth as many infected individuals worldwide) is necessary to address this injustice. WDHD 2013 hopes to place
the spotlight on recognition of this health crisis and begin the concerted effort to eliminate these completely preventable and treatable diseases.”

Throughout 2013, various important initiatives will take place. Key among these is a survey on Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC) that will be distributed at key liver meetings, as well as generally beginning in 2012, in order to collect important global statistics on liver cancer and liver diseases in various regions, with the results presented at the next World Congress of Gastroenterology, Gastro 2013 WCOG/APDW Shanghai, 21-24 September 2013. In addition, a broad range of educational offerings are being planned for presentation during the campaign year and beyond, including eight major regional symposia focused on specific regional issues related to HCC and its causes, prevention, detection and treatment..

A new page on the WGO Foundation website is created each year, which consists of a package of useful public awareness materials, various guidelines pertinent to the current year’s theme, information for physicians and patients, an area to submit a society’s event, and an area featuring what different countries and societies have done to celebrate WDHD. Events that have taken place through WGO’s national member societies and regional affiliates include lectures, press conferences, symposia, walkathons, patient awareness camps, creating a World Digestive Health Week, and much more.

Formed in 1935 and incorporated in 1958, The World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) is a federation of over 100 national societies and 4 regional associations of gastroenterology representing more than 50,000 individual members worldwide, focusing on the improvement of standards in gastroenterology training and education on a global scale. The WGO Foundation, incorporated in 2007, is dedicated to raising funds to support WGO educational programs and activities.

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For more information on WGO and its Foundation: