Zimmer Launches 'Back in the Groove' Campaign to Reduce Racial Disparities in Arthritis Pain Relief Procedures

Jun 13, 2006

Global Leader of Orthopaedic Implants Will Partner with Community Organizations for African American-Targeted Effort

WARSAW, Ind., June 13, 2006 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Zimmer Holdings, Inc. (NYSE, SWX: ZMH), a worldwide leader in orthopaedics, has partnered with Burrell, one of the nation's largest full-service African American-owned communications agencies, to develop an information campaign to reduce racial disparities in joint replacement treatment for arthritis pain patients.

Joint replacement procedures reduce pain and improve mobility for many arthritis sufferers. With less invasive techniques, patients experience shorter recovery periods and improved post-operative mobility within weeks of undergoing the procedures. However, according to the Arthritis Foundation, African American sufferers are two-thirds less likely than Caucasian patients to undergo joint replacement procedures to treat their arthritis pain. Research reported by the Foundation suggests differences in cultural and social factors contribute to the disparity.

Zimmer will launch "Back in the Groove(TM)," a community partnership initiative that will give arthritis sufferers and their loved ones unprecedented access to information about knee and hip replacement options. As part of the program, African American arthritis pain sufferers will interact outside of clinical settings with surgeons and people from their own communities who have returned to active lives after relieving their debilitating arthritis pain with less invasive knee and hip replacement procedures.

"We understand the importance of identifying priority populations for public health interventions to narrow health disparities. This campaign, along with the pioneering strides Zimmer has made in the development of less invasive procedures and gender specific knee replacement technology, offers new hope to long-suffering arthritis patients," said Zimmer Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Ray Elliott. "Zimmer has long been recognized as a leader in professional medical education, and with

'Back in the Groove,' we are building on our commitment to educate and to enhance awareness of treatment options among a population that has not had access to such information."

Zimmer maintains a strong dedication to solution-driven research and technologies that improve the quality of life for those who are in need of a joint replacement. Zimmer branded implants have been placed in millions of patients worldwide. It's the first company to be focused on the development of knee replacements shaped to fit a woman's anatomy, designed to alleviate joint pain, restore function and increase a woman's overall comfort and satisfaction with knee replacement surgery.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), arthritis is the nation's single greatest cause of chronic pain and disability. The CDC reports that African Americans say it is the leading condition that limits their major daily activities. African American women are twice as likely as Caucasian women to develop knee osteoarthritis, frequently in both knees and with greater severity. African American men are 65% more likely than Caucasian men to have knee osteoarthritis in both knees. Older African American men are also 33% more likely than Caucasian men to suffer hip osteoarthritis.

Surgeons trained in Zimmer less invasive procedures are supporting this campaign and want African Americans to realize that joint replacement is a viable option.

"Many times, there is apprehension that comes from misinformation," said James E. Wood, Jr., MD, an Orthopaedic Surgeon whose Harbor Hospital Orthopaedic practice in Baltimore serves a large number of African American patients. "After joint replacement surgery, it is not uncommon for patients to say that they only wish they had not waited so long. With today's less invasive techniques, recovery times are often shorter. Sooner than they could have ever imagined, bowlers return to bowling; shoppers return to shopping; golfers return to golf," says Dr. Wood, and he strongly recommends that patients should learn about the treatment options that are currently available for joint replacement.

Zimmer's Back in the Groove outreach initiative will consist of a multi-layered program linking physicians trained in Zimmer procedures to African American joint replacement candidates. The grassroots campaign will feature Zimmer partnering with local media and community organizations to help spread the word. Activities will culminate with a community health care event, which will feature local partnerships with faith-based and health organizations, including the National Medical Association. Those who attend the event, which will be free and open to the public, can receive one-on-one consultation from medical professionals, along with free health screenings, information and other interactive health activities.

To learn more about the campaign log onto http://www.backinthegroove.zimmer.com . Or call toll free 1-866-923-2345.

About the Company

Founded in 1927 and headquartered in Warsaw, Indiana, Zimmer is the worldwide #1 pure-play orthopaedic leader in designing, developing, manufacturing and marketing reconstructive and spinal implants, trauma and related orthopaedic surgical products. Zimmer has operations in more than 24 countries around the world and sells products in more than 100 countries. Zimmer's 2005 sales were approximately $3.3 billion. The Company is supported by the efforts of more than 6,700 employees worldwide.

Visit Zimmer on the worldwide web at http://www.zimmer.com .

SOURCE Zimmer Holdings, Inc.

Brad Bishop of Zimmer, +1-574-372-4291, bradley.bishop@zimmer.com , or Bridget Williams of Burrell, +1-312-297-9868, bwilliams@burrell.com

http://www.prnewswire.com

Copyright (C) 2006 PR Newswire. All rights reserved.

News Provided by COMTEX