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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **National Safe Handling Awareness Month Returns in April 2011 Annual campaign increases education about/awareness of hazardous drug exposure**

COLUMBUS, OH (February 24, 2011) – **National Safe Handling Awareness Month – a campaign to further education surrounding the safe handling of hazardous drugs in the healthcare setting – will be returning in April 2011 and will once again be accompanied by a complimentary continuing education (CE) webinar presented on National Safe Handling Awareness Day, Wednesday, April 20, 2011 at 1pm and 3pm EST.**

Intended for both nurses and pharmacists who handle chemotherapy and other hazardous drugs in the workplace, the webinar will be supported by an unrestricted educational grant provided by Carmel Pharma, Inc. – the official sponsor of National Safe Handling Awareness Month/Day and the maker of the PhaSeal® closed-system drug transfer device (CSTD) for the safe handling of hazardous drugs. **Interested participants may register for the event at [www.statce.com/SHAD2011](http://www.statce.com/SHAD2011).**

### **The Importance of Safe Handling**

In 2004, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) released an alert stating that “working with or near hazardous drugs in healthcare settings may cause skin rashes, infertility, miscarriage, birth defects and possibly leukemia or other cancers.”<sup>1</sup> Further evidence to support the need to take action in this area may be found below:

- The World Health Organization predicts a 50 percent increase of cancer cases over the next 20 years; this, combined with more potent chemotherapy drugs – as well as an increase in the use of hazardous drugs to treat non-malignant illnesses – will continue to elevate risk of exposure.<sup>2</sup>
- Two separate studies investigating the toxicity in healthcare personnel who handle cytotoxic (hazardous) drugs revealed a 40-50 percent increased risk for miscarriage. A total of 7094 pregnancies of 2976 pharmacy and nursing staff were examined.<sup>3,4</sup>
- A national survey conducted by the Environmental Working Group, the American Nurses Association, Health Care Without Harm and the Environmental Health Education Center at the University of Maryland School of Nursing showed that there are links between nurses’ occupational exposure to hazardous drugs and the health problems they develop such as cancer, asthma, miscarriages and children’s birth defects.<sup>5</sup>

### **About Safe Handling Awareness Month**

Now in its third year, National Safe Handling Awareness Month (April) was petitioned to raise awareness of the occupational risks associated with handling hazardous drugs and educate healthcare providers on the U.S. guidelines and safety measures that may be taken to prevent hazardous drug exposure. As the highlight of National Safe Handling Awareness Month, National Safe Handling Awareness Day (April 20) brings together national and regional educational opportunities collectively aimed at preserving the health and wellbeing of the oncology healthcare professionals who devote their lives to helping others. National Safe Handling Awareness Month and Day are officially endorsed by the International Society of Oncology Pharmacy Practitioners (ISOPP) and are officially sponsored by Carmel Pharma. For additional details on National Safe Handling Awareness Month/Day, visit [www.carmelpharmausa.com/aware4](http://www.carmelpharmausa.com/aware4) or call 866-487-9250.

**About Carmel Pharma (the maker of the PhaSeal System)**

The PhaSeal System is manufactured by Carmel Pharma AB in Gothenburg, Sweden and is distributed from its U.S. affiliate office, Carmel Pharma, Inc., in Columbus, OH. PhaSeal has been in use in the United States since 1999 and implemented in more than 2000 cancer facilities, infusion centers and private practices, including M.D. Anderson and Texas Children's in Houston, TX; City of Hope in Duarte, CA; Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, MA; SwedishAmerican Hospital in Rockford, IL; and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, just to name a few. For more information on Carmel Pharma or the PhaSeal System, please visit [www.phaseal.com](http://www.phaseal.com) or email [info@carmelpharmausa.com](mailto:info@carmelpharmausa.com). To request additional product details, high-resolution imagery, story ideas and expert references, or to learn more about the topic of safe handling from today's clinical thought leaders, please visit [www.carmelpharmausa.com/media](http://www.carmelpharmausa.com/media) or contact Laura Scherer at 614-318-2635 or [laura.scherer@carmelpharma.com](mailto:laura.scherer@carmelpharma.com).

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The NIOSH Publication No. 2004-165 page. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-165/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-165/). Accessed July 24, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. The WHO Cancer Home page. Available at: [www.who.int/cancer/en/](http://www.who.int/cancer/en/). Accessed July 24, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Valanis B, Vollmer W, Steele P. Occupational exposure to antineoplastic agents: self-reported miscarriages and stillbirths among nurses and pharmacists. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 1999; 41(8): 632-638.

<sup>4</sup> Peelen S, Roeleveld N, Heederik D, Krombout H, de Kort W. Toxic effects on reproduction in hospital personnel. ISBN 90 5749 255 5.

<sup>5</sup> Environmental Working Group. The Nurses' Health page. Available at: [www.ewg.org/sites/nurse\\_survey/analysis/main.php](http://www.ewg.org/sites/nurse_survey/analysis/main.php). Accessed July 24, 2009.