Novartis Oncology Launches GIST Alliance™ for Healthcare Professionals Treating Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumors

**Novartis Oncology is introducing GIST Alliance™, a unique support program with the goal to help healthcare professionals optimize outcomes in KIT-positive GIST patients.**

East Hanover, NJ (PRWEB) January 29, 2009 -- Though rare, gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GISTs) are currently the most common mesenchymal tumors of the gastrointestinal tract, with an estimated 3,300 to 6,000 new cases reported each year in the United States (1, 2). Approximately 2,500 of these cases are metastatic at diagnosis (3).

**GISTs** are soft tissue sarcomas. Sarcomas are difficult to differentiate from other malignancies when they are found within organs; thus, they are frequently misdiagnosed and highly underreported (4).

**Novartis Oncology** is introducing **GIST Alliance™**, a unique support program with the goal to help healthcare professionals optimize outcomes in KIT-positive GIST patients.

Novartis Oncology, the global leader in KIT-positive gastrointestinal stromal tumor (KIT+ GIST) therapy, has been working with healthcare professionals and patients worldwide to help improve the treatment of KIT+ GIST. GIST Alliance is a distinctive, integrated program that builds on the support and educational materials that Novartis Oncology has been providing to healthcare professionals and patients/caregivers by offering access to the most current resources.

For healthcare professionals, GIST Alliance provides and facilitates access to:

- Educational information on the diagnosis and clinical management of GIST
- Details on imaging/radiologic techniques used in the evaluation of GIST
- Educational information on the response of GISTs to targeted therapies
- Criteria for risk of GIST recurrence
- Blood level testing services at no cost to patients
- Resources to ease the reimbursement process for physicians and their patients
- Information about **Novartis Oncology clinical trials** for both existing GIST therapies and investigational GIST agents
- Email, telephone, and direct mail support services to respond to supplementary healthcare professional inquiries

Until the approval of oral therapies, patients with KIT+ GIST had very few treatment options. Traditional cancer therapies--such as chemotherapy and radiation--have been mostly ineffective in treating the disease. Surgical resection remains the primary intervention indicated for the management of GIST but is not always appropriate under certain conditions (5, 6).

Through GIST Alliance, Novartis Oncology is committed to develop and deliver a comprehensive strategy for healthcare professionals to get KIT+GIST patients started on treatment.

GIST Alliance is available at no cost to healthcare professionals, patients, or caregivers. Enrollment and/or participation in GIST Alliance are voluntary.

For more information visit the GIST Alliance Web site at www.GISTAlliance.com
Sources:


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