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Modern treatment for Parkinson's disease improves the well-being and the independence of people suffering from the disease

Stalevo now offers a long-awaited therapeutic option for people with Parkinson's disease experiencing end of dose "wearing-off"*

Dorval, Quebec (September 18, 2008) – People affected by Parkinson's disease and their caregivers will be happy to learn that they can now have better control over the disease. Stalevo* (now available in Canada), is indicated to treat patients with idiopathic Parkinson disease experiencing the signs and symptoms of end of dose "wearing-off" (meaning that the illness reappears before patients have time to take another dose of medication). Stalevo*, an anti-parkinsonian dopaminergic agent, is a new treatment that enhances the effects of levodopa, one of the three agents contained in the medication.

"Stalevo is an important addition to our therapeutic armamentarium for treating Parkinson's disease, says Dr. Anthony Lang, President of the Movement Disorders Society who practices at Toronto Western Hospital. "Improving the "wearing off" that is so common in this disorder will provide greater independence for our patients and improve their and their caregiver's quality of life. There are also studies ongoing exploring the potential for Stalevo to delay the development of motor complications most notably the abnormal involuntary movements or dyskinesias that so commonly complicate levodopa therapy."

Stalevo*, a combination of levodopa, carbidopa and entacapone, is indicated in the treatment of adult patients suffering from idiopathic Parkinson's disease to substitute for immediate-release levodopa-carbidopa and entacapone, previously administered as individual products. Stalevo* is also indicated to replace immediate-release levodopa-carbidopa therapy (without a simultaneous dose of entacapone) when patients experience the signs and symptoms of end of dose "wearing off" (only recommended when patients are taking a total daily dose of levodopa of 600 mg or less and not experiencing dyskinesias).¹

Stalevo* was developed to enhance the benefits of levodopa and provide patients with improved symptom control for longer periods. In addition to the convenience of administration and smaller pill size, the combination of entacapone with levodopa/carbidopa in one pill ensures that entacapone is administered with every levodopa dose, maximizing treatment benefit.

Clinical trials show that the combination of levodopa/carbidopa and entacapone is safe. During clinical trials, reported side effects were mild to moderate and generally reversible. Most

common side effects are uncontrolled movements, nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, and abdominal pain.

“Before being diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, I was a person who would live life at 100 miles per hour. Now I am constantly in slow motion,” explains Carlos, 43, who was diagnosed with the disease four years ago. “I have a tremor in my left arm and I have memory problems, so it makes it hard for me to be around people. I become frustrated because I can’t finish the tasks that I start. Sometimes I feel like my life is spiralling out of control. But I guess I’m fortunate since my disease has not progressed in the past years. I know it affects people in different ways and in much worse ways.”

About Stalevo*

Stalevo* combines levodopa, an agent used to treat Parkinson's disease, with carbidopa and an enzyme inhibitor called entacapone.

By blocking an enzyme called COMT, entacapone extends the length of time that levodopa remains in the bloodstream allowing for better control of symptoms.

Stalevo* (levodopa/carbidopa/entacapone) is available in doses of 50/12.5/200 mg, 100/25/200 mg and 150/37.5/200 mg.²

Pathology of Parkinson's disease

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative condition that affects over 100,000 Canadians. It usually affects people 50 years of age and older. Sometimes the disease is diagnosed in people under the age of 40 (less than 10 % of people newly diagnosed each year). The most frequent symptoms are shaking, stiffness of limbs and muscles, and loss of balance.

The disease progresses at a rate that varies for each individual and the dosage of medication is adapted to take into account the evolution of symptoms. Over time, non-motor symptoms may appear, such as difficulty in speaking and writing, sleep disturbances, depression, and cognitive changes.³

There is support: Parkinson Society Canada

For over 40 years, Parkinson Society Canada (PSC) has been the national voice for people who are living with Parkinson's disease. Over 100,000 Canadians have Parkinson's disease. PSC funds promising scientific research and provides support for people with Parkinson's, their families and caregivers through educational programs with over 230 chapters and support groups.. For more information, visit the website www.parkinson.ca or call 1-800-565-3000.

This year marks the 19th SuperWalk for Parkinson's, which is taking place in September throughout 80 communities across Canada. For more information, visit www.superwalk.com.

Forward-Looking Statements

The foregoing press release contains forward-looking statements that can be identified by forward-looking terminology, such as "may allow", "would also be effective" or implied statements regarding potential future revenues from Stalevo*. Such statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause the actual results to be materially different from any future results, performance, or achievements expressed or implied by such statements. There can be no guarantee that Stalevo* will reach any particular sales levels. In particular, management's expectation regarding the commercial success of Stalevo* could be affected by, among other things, uncertainties relating to product development, regulatory actions or delays or government regulation generally, the

ability to obtain or maintain patent or other proprietary intellectual property protection and competition in general, as well as factors discussed in the Form 20F filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Should one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or should underlying assumptions prove incorrect, actual results may vary materially from those described herein as they are anticipated, believed, estimated or expected. Novartis is providing the information in this press release as of this date and does not undertake any obligation to update any forward-looking statements contained in this press release as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

About Novartis Canada

Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc., a leader in the healthcare field, is committed to the discovery, development and marketing of innovative products to improve the well-being of all Canadians. Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. conducts hundreds of clinical trials across the country, seeking new treatments for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, ophthalmology and organ transplantation. In 2007, the Company invested over \$86 million in research and development. Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. employs more than 800 people in Canada and its headquarters are located in Dorval, Quebec. In addition to Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc., the Novartis Group in Canada consists of Novartis Animal Health Canada Inc., Novartis Consumer Health Canada Inc., CIBA Vision Canada Inc. and Sandoz Canada Inc. For further information about Novartis Canada, please consult www.novartis.ca.

About Novartis

Novartis AG provides healthcare solutions that address the evolving needs of patients and societies. Focused solely on healthcare, Novartis offers a diversified portfolio to best meet these needs: innovative medicines, cost-saving generic pharmaceuticals, preventive vaccines, diagnostic tools and consumer health products. Novartis is the only company with leading positions in these areas. In 2007, the Group’s continuing operations (excluding divestments in 2007) achieved net sales of USD 38.1 billion and net income of USD 6.5 billion. Approximately USD 6.4 billion was invested in R&D activities throughout the Group. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis Group companies employ approximately 98,000 full-time associates and operate in over 140 countries around the world. For more information, please visit <http://www.novartis.com>.

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Stalevo* is a registered trademark.

For more information, please contact:

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1 Stalevo* Product Monograph dated February 15, 2008
 2 Stalevo* Product Monograph, dated February 15, 2008
 3 Parkinson Society Canada, What is Parkinson's?, site visited on September 4, 2008.
<http://www.parkinson.ca/site/c.kgLNiWODKpF/b.3536063/>