



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals, Inc. to Observe Rare Disease Day

Gaithersburg, MD - February 19, 2010-----Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals will observe Rare Disease Day on February 28, along with the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) and a coalition of more than 300 patient organizations, medical societies, government agencies and companies representing the rare disease community. The purpose is to focus attention on rare diseases as a public health concern.

“People with rare diseases remain a medically underserved population around the world,” said Peter L. Saltonstall, president and CEO of NORD. “Studies have shown that it typically takes many years to get an accurate diagnosis for a rare disease. Also, little or no research is being done on many of these diseases, and more than 15 million Americans have rare diseases for which there is no treatment.”

Rare Disease Day started in Europe three years ago and now is spreading around the world. NORD is the sponsor in the U.S., and Sigma-Tau has joined the coalition organized by NORD to raise awareness of the needs of patients and families.

“We are thrilled to participate in such an exciting movement like Rare Disease Day,” said Gregg Lapointe, chief executive officer of Sigma-Tau. “As a company dedicated to providing new therapies and new hope for patients with rare diseases, we proudly support the efforts of NORD to inform the masses of the importance of identifying, diagnosing, studying, and treating the many people affected by these rare diseases.”

In the U.S., a disease is considered rare if it affects fewer than 200,000 Americans. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), there are nearly 7,000 such diseases affecting nearly 30 million Americans. That’s almost one in 10 people.

Patients and their families often feel isolated and forgotten. However, there are certain problems and challenges associated with having a rare disease that patients have in common, and Rare Disease Day is intended to focus attention on those needs.

Rare Disease Day activities in the U.S. will include a nationwide network of online videos, patient stories and blogs; newspaper, radio, and television reports; state and municipal proclamations; a Rare Disease Hall of Fame for researchers; and other activities designed to raise awareness of what it means to have a rare disease.

Rare Disease Day 2010 also will highlight the need for more medical research and the unique partnership that exists between rare disease patients and researchers. Government entities that have signed on with NORD as “Rare Disease Day Partners” to help promote awareness of the day include the NIH Office of Rare Diseases Research, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Office of Orphan Products Development, and Social Security Administration.

“More than half of the people who have rare diseases are children,” Saltonstall said. “Parents often have difficulty finding a medical expert for their child or accessing other needed services. Also, many rare diseases have no approved treatment, and insurance may not cover treatments that aren’t approved.”

In 1983, the *Orphan Drug Act* was passed by Congress to create financial incentives for companies to develop treatments for rare diseases. Since then, more than 340 “orphan” drugs and biologics have been approved by FDA. While FDA estimates that from 11 to 14 million Americans benefit from these products, that still leaves more than 15 million Americans with diseases for which there is no approved treatment.

Rare Disease Day was launched by the European Rare Disease Organization, EURORDIS, in 2008. Last year, EURORDIS asked NORD to sponsor Rare Disease Day in the U.S. Rare Disease Day also is observed in other parts of the world, including Canada, Australia, China and—for the first time this year—Japan.

NORD was established in 1983 by patient leaders who helped get the *Orphan Drug Act* passed. It provides advocacy on behalf of the rare disease community; research grants and fellowships; educational services; and patient assistance programs.

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For information about NORD: www.rarediseases.org

About Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is a U.S. based, wholly owned subsidiary of the Sigma-Tau Group, and is dedicated solely to the global development and commercialization of medicines for patients with rare (“Orphan”) diseases. Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is based in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

The Sigma-Tau Group is a privately held, research focused pharmaceutical company headquartered in Pomezia (Rome), Italy, with subsidiaries in France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Germany, Spain, and the U.S. Employing 2,400 people worldwide (400 in R&D), the Sigma-Tau Group focuses on several therapeutic areas, including cardiovascular, metabolism, central and peripheral nervous system, immunology and oncology, with a portfolio comprising 48 projects and clinical trials currently being conducted in 32 different indications.

For more information about the company, visit www.sigmatau.com

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For information on Rare Disease Day activities in the U.S.: www.rarediseaseday.us