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Nearly 8 Million Healthcare Personnel Come in Contact with Chemotherapy Drugs, According to CDC

National Safe Handling Awareness Month Webinar Calls Attention to Hazardous Drug Handling, Safety Precautions and Standards

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J., April 17, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- While the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has classified chemotherapy drugs – which are designed to be toxic and highly absorbable in order to fight cancers – as hazardous since the 1980s, there are insufficient federal or state regulations to limit healthcare workers' exposure to these substances. To help raise awareness of the risks healthcare providers face when handling the more than 150 drugs classified as hazardous by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), National Safe Handling Awareness Month is acknowledged annually in April, and National Safe Handling Awareness Day is recognized on April 20.

In recognition of National Safe Handling Awareness Month, BD Medical – a segment of BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) (NYSE: BDX), a leading global medical technology company – is hosting a complimentary webinar on the dangers associated with exposure to hazardous drugs. The online event – "Hazardous Drug Exposure: Case-Based Approach to Minimizing Occupational Risk" – examines actual cases of healthcare workers who handle hazardous drugs and explores standards and safety measures to help prevent occupational exposure from occurring.

"Scientific research has demonstrated that exposure to hazardous drugs can result in a broad spectrum of adverse health consequences ranging from mild skin irritations, allergic reactions, miscarriage and infertility to leukemia and other cancers," said Lynne Kelley, MD, Worldwide Vice President, Medical Affairs, BD Medical – Medical Surgical Systems.

"Providing education to healthcare professionals about these risks is an important step in helping ensure that they can take the necessary precautions to reduce harmful exposure."

The webinar will broadcast live on Wednesday, April 17, 2013, at 12 p.m. & 8 p.m. ET, and can be accessed at www.pharmacytimes.com/DrugSafety. Participation in this webinar is limited and available on a first-come basis. Both airtimes will be followed by a live Q&A with the presenters:

- Byron G. Peters, RPh, Director, Washington University Cancer Center Pharmacy, Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center, Department of Medicine, Division of Medical Oncology, Washington University Medical School St. Louis, MO
- Mikaela M. Olson, MS, RN, AOCNS Oncology and Hematology Clinical Nurse Specialist, Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, MD

For those unable to attend live, an audio recording will be available on demand two weeks after the event. The webinar is co-sponsored by Pharmacy Times Office of Professional

Education and Dannemiller and is supported by an educational grant from BD.

"The same properties that enable chemotherapy drugs to kill cancer cells can also damage normal cells in healthy workers. Without precautions such as proper engineering controls/ventilation, use of personal protective equipment and closed-system transfer devices being implemented, the preparation, administration and disposal of these drugs can expose workers to potentially harmful levels of chemicals," said Jim Jorgenson, MS, RPh, FASHP, Chief Operating Officer, Visante Inc. "While incorporating these techniques into the daily tasks of a healthcare professional is certainly paramount, it's also important to intentionally create a culture of safety within a clinical practice."

About National Safe Handling Awareness Month

Now in its fifth year, National Safe Handling Awareness Month (April) was created to raise awareness of the occupational risks associated with handling hazardous drugs and educate healthcare providers on the 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 well-being 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).

About BD

BD is a leading global medical technology company that develops, manufactures and sells medical devices, instrument systems and reagents. The Company is dedicated to improving people's health throughout the world. BD is focused on improving drug delivery, enhancing the quality and speed of diagnosing infectious diseases and cancers, and advancing research, discovery and production of new drugs and vaccines. BD's capabilities are instrumental in combating many of the world's most pressing diseases. Founded in 1897 and headquartered in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, BD employs nearly 30,000 associates in more than 50 countries throughout the world. The Company serves healthcare institutions, life science researchers, clinical laboratories, the pharmaceutical industry and the general public. For more information, please visit www.bd.com.

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