



## Program Backgrounder

### WHAT IS ATRIAL FIBRILLATION?

Atrial fibrillation, or AFib, is a potentially serious condition where the heart does not beat the way it should, which can result in the formation of blood clots. These blood clots can travel from the heart to the brain, where they can potentially lead to a stroke.<sup>1</sup> Strokes associated with AFib can be about twice as likely to be fatal<sup>2</sup> or severely disabling compared to non-AFib-related strokes.<sup>3</sup>

### WHAT IS *FACING AFib, GET SERIOUS ABOUT STROKE*™?

Launched in September 2010, *Facing AFib, Get Serious About Stroke* is a national program to increase awareness about AFib, a condition that can increase the risk of stroke nearly five times.<sup>4</sup> In a recent survey of more than 500 patients living with AFib,<sup>5</sup> 86 percent of them indicated that they wished there was greater public awareness about the condition.<sup>5</sup> The goal of *Facing AFib* is to encourage everyone touched by the condition to take action to face AFib and get serious about stroke. The program includes:

- Program website ([www.FacingAFib.com](http://www.FacingAFib.com))
- Educational resources and information, including: *AFIB AND STROKE: THE HEART-HEAD CONNECTION* book, a personal stroke risk assessment tool and personalized doctor discussion guides
- AFib STROKE (Atrial Fibrillation Survey To Reveal Opinions, Knowledge and Education gaps) – A new, nationally-representative survey to assess general awareness of, and attitudes toward, AFib and its related stroke risk and treatment. The survey was conducted among 507 patients, 300 physicians (150 cardiologists and 150 primary care physicians) and 217 nurse practitioners in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

### WHO IS INVOLVED?

Atrial fibrillation affects an estimated 2.3 million Americans,<sup>6</sup> including Helmut Huber, the husband of award-winning actress Susan Lucci. The couple has been facing AFib together since Helmut's diagnosis in 1999. Susan and Helmut joined *Facing AFib* to help others learn more about the condition and encourage them to get serious about stroke.



### **Susan Lucci**

Award-winning actress Susan Lucci has been supporting her husband Helmut Huber for more than a decade as he manages his AFib and reduces his risk of stroke. Susan now joins *Facing AFib* to encourage others to be proactive in supporting their loved ones with the condition.



### **Helmut Huber**

Helmut Huber, the husband of daytime TV star Susan Lucci, is participating in *Facing AFib* to share his story and encourage other patients with AFib to learn about the condition and take action to reduce their personal risk of stroke.

## **HOW CAN PEOPLE GET INVOLVED?**

The program website, [www.FacingAFib.com](http://www.FacingAFib.com), contains information about AFib and the *Facing AFib* program. The website has a personal stroke risk assessment tool, as well as a personalized discussion guide for people with AFib to use during visits with their healthcare providers. Through the website people can sign up to receive a free copy of THE HEART-HEAD CONNECTION, a book designed to provide helpful information for people with AFib to work with their doctors to reduce their AFib-related stroke risk, as well as email updates, including messages from Susan Lucci and Helmut Huber, news, website additions, and more.

## **WHO IS BEHIND *FACING AFib*?**

Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., the founding sponsor of the program, has joined with leading patient advocacy organizations to help raise public awareness of AFib and its related increased stroke risk:



National Stroke Association is the only national organization in the United States that focuses 100 percent of its efforts on stroke. The organization achieves its mission to lower the incidence and impact of stroke by developing compelling community outreach programs, calling for continued improvement in the quality of stroke patient care and educating both healthcare professionals and the general public about stroke. Visit [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org) or call 1-800-STROKES (1-800-787-6537) for more information. Join our Facebook page at [www.stroke.org/facebook](http://www.stroke.org/facebook).



StopAfib.org founder, Mellanie True Hills, created the site as part of the American Foundation for Women's Health to share what she and other atrial fibrillation (AFib) patients have learned and to provide others with information and answers to their questions. StopAfib.org is a patient-to-patient resource to help patients control their AFib so it doesn't rule their lives. The site reaches out to patients, families, and caregivers, who all deal with the life-changing impact of AFib. StopAfib.org also contains an AFib Services Locator to help patients find the right resources for treating and managing their AFib. ([www.stopafib.org](http://www.stopafib.org))

## ABOUT BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.

Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., based in Ridgefield, CT, is the largest U.S. subsidiary of Boehringer Ingelheim Corporation (Ridgefield, CT) and a member of the Boehringer Ingelheim group of companies.

The Boehringer Ingelheim group is one of the world's 20 leading pharmaceutical companies. Headquartered in Ingelheim, Germany, it operates globally with 142 affiliates in 50 countries and more than 41,500 employees. Since it was founded in 1885, the family-owned company has been committed to researching, developing, manufacturing and marketing novel products of high therapeutic value for human and veterinary medicine.

For more information, please visit <http://us.boehringer-ingelheim.com> and follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/boehringerus>.

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<sup>1</sup> NHLBI website. "What is AFib?" Available at: [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/af/af\\_what.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/af/af_what.html). Accessed on: May 2, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Lin, H.J., et al. "Stroke Severity in Atrial Fibrillation: The Framingham Study." *Stroke*. 1996; 27:1760-1764.

<sup>3</sup> Dulli, D.A., et al. "Atrial Fibrillation is Associated with Severe Ischemic Stroke." *Neuroepidemiology*. 2003; 22:118-123.

<sup>4</sup> Fuster, V., et al. "ACC/AHA/ESC 2006 Guidelines for the Management of Patients With Atrial Fibrillation – Executive Summary: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines and the European Society of Cardiology Committee for Practice Guidelines (Writing Committee to Revise the 2001 Guidelines for the Management of Patients With Atrial Fibrillation): Developed in Collaboration With the European Heart Rhythm Association and the Heart Rhythm Society." *Circulation*. 2006; 114:700-752.

<sup>5</sup> Data on file.

<sup>6</sup> Go, A.S., et al. "Prevalence of Diagnosed Atrial Fibrillation in Adults: National Implications for Rhythm Management and Stroke Prevention: the AnTicoagulation and Risk Factors In Atrial Fibrillation (ATRIA) Study." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2001; 285:2370-2375.

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