

Ignoring Insomnia Costs America \$42 Billion a Year
Research Paper Examines the Burdens of Insomnia and Potential Solutions

New York, NY (May 27, 2009) – Sanofi-aventis U.S., with research and support from The Center for Medicine in the Public Interest (CMPI), has released a report showing the lag in the diagnosis and treatment of insomnia translates to billions of dollars in lost productivity and absenteeism in the American workforce. CMPI also estimates insomnia is responsible for at least \$42 billion in direct and indirect healthcare costs each year.

The paper – *Waking Up to the Insomnia Crisis: How Insomnia is Costing America More Than \$42 Billion a Year and What We Can Do About It* – reveals that while up to 70 million Americans may suffer from some form of insomnia, a frightening number of those cases are undiagnosed and untreated, even as the condition becomes a mounting financial burden on America's employers and the healthcare system.

In fact, the economic and social impact of insomnia is devastating:

- People with insomnia miss work twice as much as those who do not suffer from the condition
- Insomnia costs employers about 4.4 days of wages per untreated individual over a six-month period, not including money spent on indirect costs, such as lost productivity and costs to treat the medical consequences of insomnia
- Healthcare professionals-in-training who work recurring 24-hour shifts with little sleep have been found to make 36% more serious medical errors and five times as many serious diagnostic errors than those whose work is limited to 16 consecutive hours

CMPI Vice President Robert Goldberg, PhD. put the problem in perspective: “We should treat insomnia as it should be treated: a serious medical condition that has significant health and economic implications. Like other chronic diseases, insomnia has been managed according to the cost of treating patients instead of the cost the disease exacts on individuals, employers, and society.”

“Lack of awareness about the condition and a communication gap between patients and physicians are to blame,” says Goldberg. “Without the proper education and support, patients don't know how to communicate their sleep problems to a healthcare provider, which means the condition goes untreated – costing America billions of dollars at a time when we can ill afford it,” said Goldberg.

CMPI President Peter Pitts notes, “In order to break insomnia out of the ‘lifestyle condition’ box in which it has been placed, we must be able to engage and educate patients, healthcare professionals, health insurers, and employers on different terms. For each audience, a new

understanding of insomnia is imperative if we hope to successfully change attitudes and action. Every day without a change in course has consequence.”

The report proposes the following plan of action for 2009:

- Assemble a coalition of mainstream media, social media, and an array of private, corporate, and government partners to raise public awareness of the serious impact insomnia has on public health and the American economy.
- Identify pathways for diagnosing and treating insomnia.
- Execute targeted outreach to patients and health care providers based on specific criteria that reflect the latest findings in genetics, clinical research and outcomes data. Patients need to be able to identify and communicate insomnia symptoms and health care providers must be primed to identify patient complaints that indicate insomnia as well as be well-versed in available solutions.
- Educate media, healthcare insurers, and employers about their roles in spreading awareness, improving care, and helping to move to a value-based treatment approach.
- Encourage health plans and employers to design wellness programs that integrate insomnia management.

This insomnia paper, which includes extensive background information on insomnia, is available at www.cmpi.org.

About CMPI

The Center for Medicine in the Public Interest is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and educational organization that seeks to advance the discussion and development of patient-centered health care.

Sanofi-aventis U.S. produced this review of insomnia information in order to educate the public and healthcare professionals about this serious medical condition. The Center for Medicine in the Public Interest (CMPI) provided health policy research and evaluation of this publication as part of its broader mission to promote preventive and patient-centered approaches to healthcare.

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