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Actress Jane Seymour's appeal generates over one million votes to help prevent atrial fibrillation-related strokes

32 disease awareness campaigns around the world will soon be awarded a share of a €1 million donation as part of a global initiative

INGELHEIM, Germany--(BUSINESS WIRE)--For non-UK and non-US media

Over one million votes received for projects submitted as part of a global initiative mark the success and worldwide reach of a campaign, initiated by Boehringer Ingelheim, to raise awareness for stroke prevention in atrial fibrillation (AF). The campaign is called *1 Mission 1 Million – Getting to the Heart of Stroke* and is fronted by actress Jane Seymour, best known for her role in the James Bond movie "Live and let die". It is an online campaign that allows members of the public to vote for awareness projects that they believe will make a difference in preventing AF-related strokes. The widespread public engagement seen so far, for a condition that is rarely talked about, has exceeded expectations from campaign organisers. People can vote on www.heartofstroke.com until 22nd June 2011.

"This is an amazing achievement for *1 Mission 1 Million* and is beyond what I ever imagined could be possible with such an initiative. I am involved because my mother suffered an AF-related stroke so I have seen first-hand the devastation this can cause. I am excited to see the impact this initiative is having around the world," said Jane Seymour, Campaign Ambassador. "If you would like to make a difference in preventing AF-related strokes please visit www.heartofstroke.com and vote for your favourite projects. Remember new votes can be cast every day and you still have until the 22nd June!"

The initiative is supported by over 45 patient and professional organisations around the world and sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim.

"It is fantastic to see the number of people being reached by *1 Mission 1 Million*," said Trudie Lobban, campaign supporter and CEO of the Atrial Fibrillation Association (AFA). "AF is the most common sustained heart rhythm disorder worldwide leading to as many as 3 million strokes a year, but with correct management many of these strokes can be prevented. It is important we all rally together to help raise awareness and fulfill our mission to prevent as many as 1 million AF-related strokes. The AFA, as a supporter of this initiative, urges people to vote on www.heartofstroke.com."

Last year, awareness projects were submitted by individuals, patient and professional groups and healthcare centres across 36 countries on www.heartofstroke.com, with 184 being put forward for public vote following a review of all projects by members of the *1 Mission 1 Million* Expert Panel.

"We set up *1 Mission 1 Million* to raise awareness of AF and its link to stroke. We will continue to build on the momentum seen so far by driving more people to the website to vote and encourage supporters of the initiative to do the same," said Judith von Gordon, Corporate Spokesperson of Boehringer Ingelheim. "AF-related strokes are more severe and debilitating than other types of stroke, devastating many lives and leading to a higher likelihood of death. We are proud to sponsor this initiative and look forward to announcing the winners later this year."

From the 184 submitted awareness projects, 32 will be awarded a share of the €1 million donation, as decided by the public and

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the Expert Panel. Information about all projects can be found on www.heartofstroke.com, which also features useful information about the risk factors for AF-related stroke and offers support and advice for people who have been diagnosed with the condition.

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Notes to Editors

About Atrial Fibrillation (AF)

AF is the most common sustained heart rhythm abnormality worldwide with one in four adults over the age of 40 developing AF in their lifetime.^{1,2} AF causes the heart to beat irregularly and often too quickly or too slowly.³ People with AF are five times more likely to suffer a stroke than people without AF and AF-related strokes tend to be more severe and disabling than non AF-related strokes.⁴⁻⁶ Many AF-related strokes can be prevented with correct management but many patients are not aware of their risk and so take no action to prevent it.⁷

About 1 Mission 1 Million

1 Mission 1 Million – Getting to the Heart of Stroke is a first-of-its-kind disease awareness initiative, supported by leading health experts and patient organisations including AntiCoagulation Europe, Atrial Fibrillation Association, Stroke Alliance for Europe and the World Heart Federation and is sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim. Project applications, submitted by healthcare professionals and organisations worldwide, have been reviewed by an Expert Panel whose members are leaders in the field of AF, and voting is now open to the public. Voting will close on 22nd June 2011 and the projects with the most votes will be awarded funding. The Expert Panel members will also select seven 'Expert Picks' – projects that are deemed to be deserving of special recognition. There are a total of 32 awards available, ranging from €10,000 to €100,000, totaling €1 million.

About the Campaign Supporters

Over 40 third party organisations around the world support the *1 Mission 1 Million – Getting to the Heart of Stroke* initiative. Please visit www.heartofstroke.com for information about these organizations, including the four global supporters.

About Boehringer Ingelheim

The Boehringer Ingelheim group is one of the world's 20 leading pharmaceutical companies. Headquartered in Ingelheim, Germany, it operates globally with 145 affiliates and more than 42,000 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.

As a central element of its culture, Boehringer Ingelheim pledges to act socially responsible. Involvement in social projects, caring for employees and their families, and providing equal opportunities for all employees form the foundation of the global operations. Mutual cooperation and respect, as well as environmental protection and sustainability are intrinsic factors in all of Boehringer Ingelheim's endeavors.

In 2010, Boehringer Ingelheim posted net sales of about 12.6 billion euro while spending almost 24% of net sales in its largest business segment Prescription Medicines on research and development.

For more information please visit www.boehringer-ingelheim.com

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