New Drug Approved for Treatment of Non Small Cell Lung Cancer in Specific Patient Population

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 1, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Lung Cancer Alliance (LCA) applauds the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of Xalkori (crizotinib) with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) who are ALK positive. The drug was approved based on data from two clinical trials, both of which showed a significant increase in overall survival.

Xalkori targets the echinoderm microtubule-associated protein-like 4-anaplastic lymphoma kinase (EML4-ALK) mutation. According to the FDA, the mutation is only present in 1-7% of people with NSCLC, primarily those diagnosed with adenocarcinoma.

"This is exciting news," said LCA President & CEO, Laurie Fenton Ambrose. "Personalized medicine is where we are headed for lung cancer treatments. This is one of the first steps towards identifying medications that help select populations of people. We must continue to identify other mutations and find drugs that treat them to finally see cures for lung cancer."

"I was enrolled in the phase I trial for this drug," said Linnea Duff, NH resident and longtime lung cancer survivor. "At the time I began the trial, I was hoping to have my life extended for a few months. Instead, I got three more years to spend with my family and friends. In addition, because this was a targeted therapy, the side effects were minimal and my quality of life during this time has been remarkable."

Xalkori has shown a life changing response to lung cancer in those patients who are ALK positive. Lung Cancer Alliance encourages lung cancer patients to discuss genetic testing options with their health care team.

It is important to note that many genetic mutations have been identified but not all have drugs to target the mutations at this time. With continued focus from researchers and increased participation in clinical trials, more and more of these personalized therapies will become available.

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