



## **WellStar Health System and Pacira Pharmaceuticals Announce Partnership to Minimize Opioid Use and Standardize Outcomes Across Surgical Procedures**

January 8, 2018

**Agreement will focus on designing and deploying best practice enhanced recovery protocols across therapeutic areas in 11 Georgia-based hospitals**

PARSIPPANY, N.J. and ATLANTA, Jan. 08, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- WellStar Health System, the largest health system in Georgia, and Pacira Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (NASDAQ:PCRX) today announced a joint commitment to address opioid use and dependence following surgery. Through a comprehensive opioid minimization strategy, the organizations will work together to educate hospital clinicians and administrators about the burden of postsurgical opioids; develop enhanced recovery protocols to reduce use in key surgical procedures; and standardize the rollout of these protocols across WellStar's 11 hospitals.

In partnership, WellStar and Pacira will develop procedure-specific pain management protocols centered on a foundation of non-opioid medications that can effectively control pain without the side effects and long-term risks of misuse, abuse or addiction associated with opioids. As such, the organizations intend to demonstrate the significant positive impact on patient recovery and hospital economics achievable when healthcare and industry work together to advance a mutual cause to improve patient care.



"Minimizing unnecessary exposure to opioids is an integral component for our patients as they recover from surgery," said John A. Brennan, M.D., FACEP, executive vice president and chief clinical integration officer of WellStar Health System. "We are pleased to be working with Pacira as we carry out our mission of creating and delivering high-quality healthcare services that improve the health and well-being of the individuals and communities we serve."

Under the terms of the partnership, the organizations will develop a suite of clinician-facing opioid education materials, as well as quality improvement data that tracks the progress of protocol implementation and the resulting reduction in overall opioid consumption. This data will guide next steps in optimizing existing or developing new care pathways. A playbook of best teachings and case studies will be developed to inform best practices in transferring protocols from one hospital to an entire hospital system, which can be provided as a resource for other similar system-wide endeavors.

"We are excited and proud to partner with WellStar Health System on this joint endeavor to deploy and measure the impact of procedure-specific enhanced recovery protocols, reduce reliance on opioid use, and disseminate key successes and learnings to the marketplace," said Dave Stack, chairman and chief executive officer of Pacira.

Beyond the unwanted and potentially life-threatening adverse events associated with opioid use, research continues to uncover the connection between their introduction in the hospital setting and the overall societal opioid burden.

A *JAMA Internal Medicine* article highlighted that for opioid-naïve patients, many surgical procedures are associated with an increased risk of chronic opioid use in the postsurgical period;<sup>1</sup> perhaps more startling, a recent national survey revealed that 1 in 10 patients admit they've become addicted to or dependent on opioids after being exposed to these medications following an operation.<sup>2</sup>

Adding further validity to the importance and impact of these collaborative opioid-sparing protocols is the element of patient preference. A 2014 study uncovered that more than half of postsurgical patients prefer a non-opioid option,<sup>3</sup> and a national survey conducted in 2016 found many patients have indicated they are delaying surgery due to fear of taking opioids to manage their pain.<sup>2</sup>

According to a 2016 analysis of health care claims, opioids also significantly contribute to health care system costs.<sup>4</sup> The study showed that the national aggregated dollar value of charges related to opioid-related diagnoses increased more than 1,000 percent from 2011 (\$32.4 million) to 2015 (\$445.7 million), and private payers' average costs for patients abusing or dependent on opioids was almost \$16,000 more per patient than the average cost per patient across all patients' claims.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently shared their findings on the high societal cost of the opioid epidemic, which burdens the U.S. economy with an estimated total of \$78.5 billion a year.<sup>5</sup>

### **About WellStar Health System**

WellStar Health System, the largest health system in Georgia, is known nationally for its innovative care models, focused on improving quality and access to healthcare. WellStar consists of WellStar Medical Group, 250 medical office locations, outpatient centers, health parks, a pediatric center, nursing centers, hospice, homecare, as well as 11 hospitals: WellStar Atlanta Medical Center, WellStar Atlanta Medical Center South, WellStar Kennestone Regional Medical Center (anchored by WellStar Kennestone Hospital), WellStar West Georgia Medical Center, and WellStar Cobb, Douglas, North Fulton, Paulding, Spalding Regional, Sylvan Grove and Windy Hill hospitals. As a not-for-profit, WellStar continues to reinvest in the health of the communities it serves with new technologies and treatments. For more information, visit [wellstar.org](http://wellstar.org).

### **About Pacira**

Pacira Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (NASDAQ:PCRX) is a specialty pharmaceutical company dedicated to advancing and improving postsurgical outcomes for acute care practitioners and their patients. The company's flagship product, EXPAREL® (bupivacaine liposome injectable suspension) was

commercially launched in the United States in April 2012. EXPAREL utilizes DepoFoam®, a unique and proprietary product delivery technology that encapsulates drugs without altering their molecular structure, and releases them over a desired period of time. To learn more about Pacira, including the corporate mission to reduce overreliance on opioids, visit [www.pacira.com](http://www.pacira.com).

#### Forward Looking Statements

*Any statements in this press release about the company's future expectations, plans, outlook and prospects, and other statements containing the words "believes," "anticipates," "plans," "estimates," "expects," "intends," "may" and similar expressions, constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Actual results may differ materially from those indicated by such forward-looking statements as a result of various important factors, including risks relating to: the success of the company's sales and manufacturing efforts in support of the commercialization of EXPAREL; the rate and degree of market acceptance of EXPAREL and the company's other products; the size and growth of the potential markets for EXPAREL and the company's ability to serve those markets; the company's plans to expand the use of EXPAREL to additional indications and opportunities, and the timing and success of any related clinical trials; the related timing and success of United States Food and Drug Administration supplemental New Drug Applications; the outcome of the U.S. Department of Justice inquiry; the company's plans to evaluate, develop and pursue additional DepoFoam-based product candidates; clinical trials in support of an existing or potential DepoFoam-based product; the company's commercialization and marketing capabilities; the company's and Patheon UK Limited's ability to successfully and timely construct dedicated EXPAREL manufacturing suites; and other factors discussed in the "Risk Factors" of the company's most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2016 and in other filings that the company periodically makes with the SEC. In addition, the forward-looking statements included in this press release represent the company's views as of the date of this press release. Important factors could cause actual results to differ materially from those indicated or implied by forward-looking statements, and as such the company anticipates that subsequent events and developments will cause its views to change. However, while the company may elect to update these forward-looking statements at some point in the future, it specifically disclaims any obligation to do so. These forward-looking statements should not be relied upon as representing the company's views as of any date subsequent to the date of this press release.*

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Pacira Pharmaceuticals, Inc. WellStar Health System