



## **Lupus Groups Seek International Attention for Chronic Disease Afflicting Five Million People Worldwide**

Dear Media Representative:

Lupus groups around the world have united to sponsor the eighth World Lupus Day observance on 10 May 2011. At least five million people worldwide have lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease that strikes mostly young women of childbearing age.

World Lupus Day will focus on the need for heightened public awareness, improved patient healthcare services, increased research into the causes of and a cure for lupus, enhanced physician diagnosis and treatment of lupus, and better epidemiological data on lupus globally. The enclosed materials provide background information about lupus and its impact.

Lupus affects more than just the person with the disease -- it also impacts their family, friends, and work colleagues. Still, it is widely under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals, and governments, driving the need for greater awareness. Early recognition, diagnosis and treatment of lupus help to slow the debilitating effects of the disease. However, lupus is often difficult to diagnose because symptoms frequently mimic common illnesses. Increasing awareness of lupus will save lives.

World Lupus Day was first observed in 2004, and a number of special events were held to highlight its importance. Most significant was the issuing of the inaugural World Lupus Day Proclamation, recognizing this historic day and demonstrating concern for the needs of millions of individuals globally. This year, lupus organizations hope even more governments will sign and endorse the Proclamation.

Please join the international effort to increase public awareness and understanding of lupus by promoting the eighth annual World Lupus Day in your publication. For additional information, please visit the World Lupus Day website at [www.worldlupusday.org](http://www.worldlupusday.org).

Sincerely,