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## **Education for Health Presents New Model Showing £1.2billion Impact to UK Economy due to COPD in Patients of Working Age**

***Birmingham, 1 July, 2010*** - Leading charity, Education for Health today presented new findings from COPD Uncovered, an international initiative highlighting the economic and social impact of COPD in people aged between 45 and 65. A new economic impact model has shown that as the disease heads towards being the third biggest cause of death globally by 2020<sup>1</sup>, the cost implication to country healthcare systems and lost productivity within those of the working age group is significant. The findings highlight an urgent need to keep individuals with COPD active and contributing to society for the benefit of all<sup>2</sup>.

In association with health economists, industry specialists and Education for Health, the COPD economic model was developed to provide the first step to uncovering the size of the economic impact of COPD amongst the working age population. According to its calculations, in the UK alone, the economic burden is £1.2billion per annum<sup>3</sup>, this includes not only direct healthcare costs, but factors such as lost income tax, payment of state benefits and productivity loss due to COPD. These calculations are based on the current age of retirement – if this is increased then the economic impact will also rise.

In a breakdown, the data shows that lost productivity due to early retirement of patients with COPD aged between 45-64 years is £728million per year. On an individual basis this results in a productivity loss of £110,000 for male COPD patients and £41,000 for women aged 45 years followed until death or age 64 years. In addition, the annual impaired productivity costs of people that haven't retired are £177million. The data also shows that the total annual healthcare costs incurred by COPD patients among this age group in the UK are £277.7million per annum<sup>3</sup>.



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Speaking at COPD7, an International Conference on Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Education for Health's Chief Executive, Monica Fletcher said: "Studies have already shown that COPD has a devastating impact on quality of life, however, we now have a tool to enable us to determine the financial implications of this debilitating disease. These figures further demonstrate that early diagnosis and management of COPD may enable patients to maintain active and productive lives for longer, thereby helping to reduce the economic burden of the condition and improve patient quality of life".

The COPD economic impact model has been developed as a method for estimating the economic burden of COPD amongst a working population. This investigation has used the UK as a case study, however, the model can be replicated in any country where relevant data is available.

Approximately 210 million people worldwide are currently known to be living with COPD<sup>4</sup>. Symptoms are often mistakenly attributed to aging or other respiratory diseases such as asthma, resulting in COPD being undetected in about 50% of cases<sup>5</sup> and misdiagnosed in about 23%<sup>6</sup>. A 30% increase in prevalence is expected by the year 2030<sup>7</sup>. The estimated prevalence of COPD includes approximately 4-13% of adults in Europe<sup>8-12</sup> and approximately 7% of adults in the United States<sup>13</sup>. While COPD was previously more common in men, an increase in smoking among women has led to the disease affecting men and women almost equally<sup>4</sup>.

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About Education for Health**

Education for Health is the largest international charity that undertakes research which contributes to the evidence base for health professional education as a health improvement intervention; and trains health professionals to make a real difference to the lives of patients with long term conditions. With an active advocacy programme, lobbying strategy and sustainable educational projects across the globe, Education for

Health unveiled new elearning plans last week. These will enable the Charity to support stakeholders across the global COPD community to improve their health and social care workforce skills in earlier COPD diagnosis and management and ultimately contribute to reducing the economic impact of COPD.



## About the COPD Uncovered Economic Impact Model

The COPD Uncovered economic impact model is an evidence-based tool aimed at quantifying the economic burden of COPD in a population aged 45–64 years. The model uses the UK as a case study to explore the cost impact of COPD across three areas: healthcare utilization, impaired productivity and lost productivity resulting from early retirement due to COPD.

The COPD Uncovered economic impact model was developed by:

- M. Baldwin, Novartis Horsham Research Centre, Horsham, West Sussex, United Kingdom
- P. Williams, Navitas BioPharma Consulting, Beaconsfield, United Kingdom
- M. Fletcher, Education for Health, Warwick, United Kingdom
- J. Hutton, Professor of Health Economics, University of York, United Kingdom

The research was supported by an educational grant from Novartis Pharma A.G.

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