### Schizophrenia Facts

- Schizophrenia is a chronic brain disorder characterized by a disruption of thought processes that can cause delusions and hallucinations, and affects about 2.4 million Americans<sup>2,3</sup> and 24 million people worldwide.<sup>4</sup> Schizophrenia often becomes apparent in late adolescence or early adulthood, but the signs and symptoms vary from person to person. Initial signs can include isolating oneself, sleep problems, and irritability.<sup>1</sup>
- While experts are not entirely clear on the cause of schizophrenia, they believe the disease is influenced by several factors, including genetics, the environment and a possible imbalance in chemical reactions of the brain.<sup>1</sup>
- Patients are at risk for relapse, which is a re-emergence or worsening of psychotic symptoms.<sup>5</sup> Certain criteria often are used to define relapse, including aggravation of psychotic symptoms and hospital admission.<sup>6,7</sup>
- Common contributors to disease relapse include substance abuse, stressful life events, and poor adherence to medication.<sup>8</sup>
- Recurring relapses may result in decreased functioning, increased morbidity, and progression of the illness.<sup>5</sup>

### The Significant Personal and Social Costs of Schizophrenia

#### Employment

At any given time, the vast majority of people with schizophrenia – 73% to 89% – are not employed. Of those who are employed, many work in non-competitive employment situations (e.g., do not compete with applicants from the general public) or work part-time.<sup>9</sup>

#### Increased Healthcare Costs

In 2002, the cost of schizophrenia to the U.S. healthcare system was estimated to be $62.7 billion.<sup>11</sup>
- **Direct costs** estimated at $30.3 billion included expenditures for hospital and nursing home care, physician and other professional services and drugs, among other expenses.
- **Indirect costs** estimated at $32.4 billion included lost productivity due to morbidity and premature mortality and legal encounters.

#### Increased Morbidity & Mortality

In a review of multiple studies, it was calculated that the mortality rate for people with schizophrenia is 1.6 times greater than in a general population of similar age and gender, and the risk of suicide is 9 times greater.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, suicide is one of the leading causes of premature death among people with schizophrenia, with an estimated 10 to 13% taking their lives and approximately 40% attempting suicide at least once.<sup>13</sup>

#### Community Impact

Based on a review of multiple studies, the average rate of schizophrenia among the homeless population is about 11%.<sup>14</sup>

Substance abuse is common among patients with schizophrenia, with reports of lifetime abuse estimated to be as high as 47% and approximately 33% of patients with an alcohol dependence disorder.<sup>8</sup>

Individuals with schizophrenia may have a higher risk of encounters with the criminal justice system than the general population. In one retrospective study, about half (46%) of participants reported at least one encounter with the criminal justice system.<sup>15</sup>

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See References on Reverse Side
9. Slade E et al. Symptom effects on employment in a structural model of mental illness and treatment: Analysis of patients with schizophrenia. Jour Mental Health Policy Econ, 2001; 4: 25-34