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**STRAW+10 Symposium to Convene Experts to Revisit Staging of Reproductive Aging**

*Leading Groups Will Assess—and Aim to Advance—  
the Ability to Predict Onset of the Menopausal Transition*

CLEVELAND, OH (August 2, 2011)—A scientific symposium developed with major support from the National Institutes of Health will bring together a coalition of expert organizations in advance of the 2011 Annual Meeting of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) to refine the gold standard for defining reproductive aging.

The organizations' efforts will build on STRAW (STaging Reproductive Aging in Women), which represented the initial effort for experts to develop the first universal approach for staging women's reproductive aging. Now, 10 years after STRAW, experts are reconvening in an initiative called STRAW+10 to update the medical and scientific community about progress in defining the reproductive stages in a woman's life from premenopause to the late postmenopausal period. The updates will guide future scientific studies of menopause and ultimately help predict the onset of the menopausal transition and menopause in individual women.

The symposium, named "STRAW+10: Addressing the Unfinished Agenda of Staging Reproductive Aging," will be convened on Tuesday, September 20, 2011 (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), in Washington, DC, one day before the start of the 2011 NAMS Annual Meeting.

**What Is Reproductive Aging?**

The STRAW+10 Symposium will focus on *female reproductive aging*, a natural process in women that starts at birth and continues through the postmenopausal period. Here the focus will be on updated approaches to understanding clinical events and laboratory tests that might lend insights into when a woman will enter the menopausal transition and when she will complete the transition through menopause.

Until a decade ago, there was no universal, agreed-upon approach for consistently defining and staging female reproductive aging. As a result, researchers studying issues such as menopause and fertility used different approaches to categorizing

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patients. Similarly, clinicians had no universal guidelines to address women's questions about whether they were entering the menopausal transition. To address this limitation, the Stages of Reproductive Aging Workshop (STRAW) produced a consensus document in 2001 (see <http://www.menopause.org/PSstraw01.pdf>) whose recommendations quickly became the standard for classifying female reproductive aging through menopause and significantly framed and advanced research in the field over the past decade.

### **Why STRAW+10?**

Important advances in the science of reproductive aging have been made in the years since the initial STRAW publication. Therefore, several of the organizations that sponsored the initial STRAW project—NAMS, the National Institute on Aging (NIA), and the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM)—are now reconvening to expand on their earlier work. Importantly, they have enlisted for STRAW+10 several new co-sponsors that provide leadership in medical and scientific issues relating to reproductive aging, including the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), the International Menopause Society (IMS), and The Endocrine Society.

“In the 10 years since STRAW, our understanding of the ovary–brain interactions that occur before and after the final menstrual period has advanced considerably,” explains STRAW+10 Program Chair Siobán D. Harlow, PhD, an epidemiologist at the University of Michigan School of Public Health who specializes in reproductive aging. “Our understanding of the implications of these interactions for women's health has advanced as well.”

Primary objectives of STRAW+10 include:

- Discussing criteria for the onset of early menopause in light of new population-based data relating to reproductive hormones and ovarian markers
- Assessing how to apply reproductive staging algorithms to women with higher body mass index and women who smoke
- Providing recommendations for staging of women following gynecological surgery, chemotherapy, and hormone therapy as well as in women with polycystic ovarian syndrome and chronic diseases like HIV/AIDS
- Assessing potential criteria for staging postmenopause

“Researchers, clinicians, and women themselves will all benefit from having a more precisely defined staging system, as that will help to better characterize research populations for menopause-related studies,” says Margery L.S. Gass, MD, NCMP, Executive Director of NAMS and another leading STRAW+10 organizer.

The STRAW+10 Symposium will explore these issues across a day of scientific presentations and panel discussions by national and international experts in ovarian and reproductive aging (see <http://www.menopause.org/STRAWplus10agenda.pdf> for the agenda of topics and speakers).

These presentations and discussions, which are open to the media and to interested clinicians and researchers, will form the basis of an updated set of recommendations (STRAW+10) to be developed by working groups of experts in a closed session the following day. The final STRAW+10

recommendations will be published simultaneously several months later in the official journals of the sponsoring societies.

### **STRAW+10 Highlights to Be Summarized at NAMS Annual Meeting**

Additionally, attendees of the 2011 NAMS Annual Meeting will be treated to a sneak peek at the STRAW+10 recommendations via a plenary session at the meeting from 9:00 to 10:30 Thursday morning, September 22. This session will feature key faculty from the STRAW+10 Symposium summarizing evidence presented at the symposium and outlining likely points of consensus on updates in the forthcoming STRAW+10 report.

Both the STRAW+10 Symposium and the 2011 NAMS Annual Meeting will be held at the Gaylord National Hotel in Washington, DC. The NAMS Annual Meeting runs from September 21 to 24; see <http://www.menopause.org/meetings/sciprogram.pdf> for the full scientific program.

Founded in 1989, The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) is North America's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the health and quality of life of all women during midlife and beyond through an understanding of menopause and healthy aging. Its multidisciplinary membership of 2,000 leaders in the field—including clinical and basic science experts from medicine, nursing, sociology, psychology, nutrition, anthropology, epidemiology, pharmacy, and education—makes NAMS uniquely qualified to serve as the definitive resource for health professionals and the public for accurate, unbiased information about menopause and healthy aging.

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*Note: Advance registration is required for all media for the STRAW+10 Symposium and the 2011 NAMS Annual Meeting. Registration is complimentary to members of the media. Please contact Judy Cerne or Laura Lytle at McKinney-Cerne Inc by phone (440-352-2081) or email ([jcerne@mckinneyad.com](mailto:jcerne@mckinneyad.com) or [llytle@mckinneyad.com](mailto:llytle@mckinneyad.com)) to confirm your attendance and/or to arrange interviews with speakers regarding their presentations.*

*Members of the scientific and consumer media interested in attending the STRAW+10 Symposium or NAMS Annual Meeting are encouraged to make travel reservations early. Hotel reservations should be made directly with the Gaylord National in Washington, DC, at 301-965-4000 or via the link on the NAMS website at <http://www.menopause.org/meetings/venue.aspx>. Note: A room reservation does not qualify as registration for the Annual Meeting or STRAW+10 Symposium.*