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Who Needs Genetic Testing for Breast Cancer?

Presentation will review latest advances in genetic testing, who should be tested, and when

CLEVELAND – (October 3, 2018) – Advances are regularly being made in cancer genetics. But, if patients aren't screened and diagnosed early enough, the advances can't save lives. A presentation at The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) Annual Meeting in San Diego, October 3-6, will review the various genetic testing options for breast cancer, as well as profile those who should be tested.

It is estimated that 12-14% of breast cancers are related to hereditary cancer predisposition syndromes. That means nearly 35,000 cases of breast cancer every year are attributable to hereditary risk. When breast cancer is detected early enough, women have significantly better chances of survival. Those chances increase if the probability of getting breast cancer can be decreased through the use of various preventive medications and risk-reducing surgical procedures.

In her presentation at the upcoming NAMS Annual Meeting, Dr. Holly Pederson from the Cleveland Clinic will provide compelling data designed to encourage healthcare providers to be more proactive in identifying those patients most at risk and when to recommend genetic counseling and testing. She will discuss the various advances in genetic testing, including multigene panel testing, which is proving to be more effective and cost-efficient, as well as discuss emerging SNP panels and the pros and cons around direct to consumer tests.

“It is imperative that we identify those patients with a hereditary predisposition to breast cancer as early as possible” says Dr. Pederson. “If patients are concerned about the cost of genetic testing, they can be reassured that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act identifies BRCA testing as a preventive service. Medicare provides coverage for affected patients with a qualifying personal history, and 97% of commercial insurers and most state Medicaid programs provide coverage for hereditary cancer testing.”

“Healthcare providers need to understand the importance of early screening and the advances being made in cancer genetics, making it possible to help save lives,” says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director.

Drs. Pederson and Pinkerton are available for interviews before the presentation at the Annual Meeting.

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. To learn more about NAMS, visit www.menopause.org.