



New, non-pharmaceutical treatment for panic disorder now offered at Allegheny Health Network through Highmark Health's VITAL Innovation Program

Pittsburgh PA and Danville CA – (August 31, 2015) – Highmark Health, Allegheny Health Network and Palo Alto Health Sciences have announced that the Freespira Breathing System is being made available to patients who suffer from panic disorder and symptoms of panic through Highmark Health's new VITAL Innovation Program.

Cleared by the FDA in 2013, Freespira is a non-pharmaceutical, non-invasive 4 week treatment that is clinically proven to help reduce or eliminate symptoms of panic disorder, a mental health condition in which debilitating anxiety and fear arise frequently and without apparent cause. Panic symptoms include sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, chest discomfort, dizziness or nausea. During an episode people may believe that they are having a heart attack or stroke, that they are suffocating, or that they are losing their mind.

"We created the VITAL program to provide promising new, FDA-cleared treatments to patients without undue delay or complexity," said Dr. Alan J. Russell, Chief Innovation Officer and Executive Vice President, Allegheny Health Network.

People with panic disorder may not realize it, but they breathe differently than other people all of the time, not just when they are having a panic episode . With direction from a therapist, the patient receives critical respiration feedback to help them normalize their breathing pattern, which has been clinically shown to reduce or eliminate panic symptoms.

“We are pleased to have Freespira selected for the VITAL program,” said Debra Reisenhel, CEO of Palo Alto Health Sciences Inc. “We believe that Freespira is already making a positive difference in patients’ lives. They are able to re-engage in situations they had been avoiding for years. In addition, panic disorder represents significant costs to the health system, and Freespira can help reduce these costs while improving the lives of patients.”

In a recently presented Freespira clinical trial, 98% of patients demonstrated panic symptom reduction and 64% were free from panic episodes after the four-week Freespira treatment. In previous clinical trials, 96% of patients experienced symptom reduction and 68% of patients remained panic attack free at 12 months.

“The Freespira treatment is particularly important because of the speed and efficacy demonstrated through the clinical trials, “ said Dr. Van Nickell, System Chair, Department of Psychiatry, Allegheny Health Network. “Patients got well quickly and many saw a return to normal life. By contrast, other current therapies show more inconsistent results.”

In the United States, over 6 million people annually suffer from panic disorder. Panic episodes which affect a total of 27 million adults in the U.S. every year are also a common component of other anxiety disorders. Over \$5 billion is spent annually in the U.S. on medications and cognitive therapy to treat panic disorder.

VITAL’s mission is to leverage Highmark Health's position as one of the largest integrated health care delivery and financing systems in the nation to accelerate the pace with which novel technologies and services are made available to our customers. In doing so, members and patients will be afforded access to safe new technologies without undue financial burden while payers will be able to understand the full impact of new technologies on their members without changing insurance medical policy prematurely. Additionally, providers will gain early access to novel technologies and a first-hand understanding of their impact on patients. Technology vendors will have the opportunity to prove the benefits of their new innovations to patients, providers and payers.

For more information or to call for an appointment, contact Allegheny Health Network at 412-330-4388 or freespira@ahn.org.

About Allegheny Health Network

Allegheny Health Network is an integrated health care delivery system serving the Western Pennsylvania region. The network is comprised of eight hospitals, including Allegheny General Hospital (its flagship academic medical center), Allegheny Valley Hospital, Canonsburg Hospital, Forbes Hospital, Jefferson Hospital, Saint Vincent Hospital, Westfield Memorial Hospital and West Penn Hospital; a research institute; Health + Wellness Pavilions; and a health care group purchasing organization. The network employs approximately 17,000 people, including more than 2,100 physicians on its medical staff. The network also serves as a clinical campus for both Temple University School of Medicine and Drexel University College of Medicine.

About Highmark Health

Highmark Health, a Pittsburgh, PA based enterprise that employs more than 35,000 people nationwide and serves 40 million Americans in all 50 states, is the third largest integrated health care delivery and financing network in the nation. Highmark Health is the parent company of Highmark Inc., Allegheny Health Network, and HM Health Solutions. Highmark Inc. and its subsidiaries and affiliates provide health insurance to 5.3 million members in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Delaware as well as dental insurance, vision care and related health products through a national network of diversified businesses that include United Concordia Companies, HM Insurance Group, Davis Vision and Visionworks. Allegheny Health Network is the parent company of an integrated delivery network that includes eight hospitals, a community-based network of physician organizations, and a group purchasing organization, ambulatory surgery centers, and health and wellness pavilions in western Pennsylvania. HM Health Solutions focuses on meeting the information technology platform and other business needs of the Highmark Health enterprise as well as unaffiliated health insurance plans by providing proven business processes, expert knowledge and integrated cloud-based platforms. To learn more, please visit www.highmarkhealth.org. More details about Highmark Health's VITAL Innovation Program can be found at: <http://vitalinnovationprogram.org>.

About Palo Alto Health Sciences

Palo Alto Health Sciences, Inc. is a privately held medical device company based in Danville, CA dedicated to addressing mental health conditions with evidenced -based, non-invasive, pharmaceutical- free solutions. The Freespira Breathing System is commercially available throughout the United States. To learn more, please visit <http://www.freespira.com> or contact info@pahealthsciences.com.

###