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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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APFED Announces Approval of ICD9 Codes for Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disorders

(July 17, 2008) Texas -- APFED announced today that ICD-9-CM codes have been approved for Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disorders, EGID, by the National Council for Health Statistics, NCHS. APFED submitted its proposal to the NCHS in September 2007 for four diseases: eosinophilic esophagitis, gastritis, gastroenteritis and colitis, all types of EGIDs. Thousands of patients suffer from these debilitating disorders; however until now they could not be coded correctly, making it difficult for medical professionals or researchers to determine how large a percentage of the population had these disorders.

The ICD-9-CM coding system is an international classification system which groups related diseases and procedures for the purpose of reporting statistical information. ICD-9-CM codes provide a uniform language, and thereby serve as an effective means for reliable nationwide communication among physicians, patients, and third parties (QCMetrix.com). ICD-9-CM codes are necessary for billing, insurance and medical records, disease management, treatment advances, research and national statistics.

Even though suggestions for ICD-9-CM codes are normally not initiated by patient advocacy organizations, APFED, in keeping with its progressive mission to create awareness of EGID, felt the need to be at the forefront of these requests. Over the last two years, APFED worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Center for National Health Statistics to create unique ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes for EGID.

"Approval of these ICD-9-CM codes will permit accurate classification of these disorders and bring recognition of EGID to a new level", stated Beth Mays, APFED President and Founder.

NCHS has classified the following codes to designate the specific categories of EGID:

- 530.13 Eosinophilic Esophagitis
- 535.7 Eosinophilic Gastritis
- 558.41 Eosinophilic Gastroenteritis
- 558.42 Eosinophilic Colitis

Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disorders, EGID, are distinct diseases affecting the gastrointestinal tract, which render the patient unable to tolerate food proteins. Recent demographic studies estimate that more than 1:2000 children live with eosinophilic esophagitis, in which only the esophagus, the tube connecting the mouth to stomach, is affected. Statistics on the adult population are currently unknown.

As the medical community becomes more aware of Eosinophilic Disorders, these numbers are expected to rise. Due to the lack of awareness among the medical community and the general public of these disorders, patients may wait 2 to 4 years to obtain an accurate diagnosis and receive proper treatment. More often than not, these disorders are misdiagnosed as other diseases.

Treatments for these disorders include total food elimination, requiring patients to live off an elemental formula which can be taken either orally or via a feeding tube; limited/restricted diets; and/or steroid treatments. There is currently no cure for EGID.

EGIDs are becoming increasingly common, with an incidence similar to household names such as Crohn's and ulcerative colitis. Due to lack of accurate reporting, the true prevalence is not known, a problem APFED feels the new ICD-9-CM codes will solve. Unique codes are needed in order to allow researchers to track or identify patients with these disorders, develop new treatments, permit accurate reporting of EGIDs, and improve awareness.

APFED, a non-profit 501(c)3 volunteer-run patient advocacy organization, supports patients and families living with eosinophilic disorders.

For more information, please contact Beth Mays at 713-498-8216.

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