



Namenda

(memantine HCl®)



Extending memory and function

THE NAMENDA LAUNCH TEAM FOREST PHARMACEUTICALS

The Namenda Launch Team

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market challenges beyond launching into a competitive marketplace. As the first drug approved for moderate-to-severe Alzheimer's disease, a considerable amount of education would be needed for physicians to understand the new mechanism, to recognize when a patient has moved into the moderate-to-severe stage of the disease, and to provide the clinical basis for a shift in the treatment paradigm. Patients in the moderate-to-severe stages of the disease have more options with Namenda, either to be treated with Namenda alone or in combination with another approved drug.

This required significant education activity including dissemination of clinical trials information through medical meetings, journals, teleconferences, continuing education, and peer-to-peer presentations. By the time the new drug application was filed, launch planning activities were fully engaged, with internal and external teams working synergistically

to successfully manage the complexities of such a major undertaking.

Led by Forest Laboratories' (New York City) Executive Director of Marketing, Joann Armitage, the Forest launch team worked closely together to clearly and accurately communicate to physicians, patients, and caregivers about a product such as Namenda. Forest enlisted the expertise of Fleishman Hilliard for PR, along with elements of Young & Rubicam, including Sudler and Hennessey, for strategic planning, professional advertising, and communication; Precept Education Sciences for physician education; and IntraMed, for meeting planning and other educational activities. J. Knipper and Company was called in a week before approval to facilitate multiple mailings to 470,000 health care providers and provide support for a toll-free number for consumers and health care providers.

All components were in place and working together to

The launch of Namenda (memantine) in January 2004 provided a new treatment option for patients with Alzheimer's disease who in the past had none. Alzheimer's is a degenerative disease that begins as memory loss, first of familiar names and places, and then robs a person of knowing their own name and their own family. As it progresses into the moderate stage of the disease, functionality is also lost. Patients eventually are unable to feed or toilet themselves, and lose all mobility in the severe stage.

Namenda is indicated for moderate-to-severe Alzheimer's disease. It is the first drug to receive this approval and is the first new mechanism of action to launch for Alzheimer's disease in 11 years. The other products in this category are acetylcholinesterase inhibitors, indicated for mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's disease.

The Namenda team knew they would face a number of



Left to right (top row): Jeffrey Lawrence, Sonny Stafford, Alexis Rich, Debra Baxter-Schmitt, Alina Fridman, Michael Davis, Mark Hein; **(bottom row):** Joann Armitage, Josephine Pedalino, Delta Schonhoft, Pat Setji, Debra Marchese. **Not Pictured:** Peggy Palamar, Marybeth Neger, Gayle Silverman, Gwen Washington, Vita Martino.

prepare for launch, which was anticipated to occur Summer 2004, based on a typical FDA timeline. The FDA approved Namenda on October 16, 2003.

Forest recognized the need to make Namenda available to this desperate audience as soon as possible, despite not having a fully trained salesforce available for promotion until March 2003. To bridge the gap between availability (January 2004) and salesforce promotion (March 2004), Forest established the Namenda Central Access Program, which served to provide information on the approval and availability of Namenda, offered physician and patient education on the benefits of Namenda in moderate-to-severe Alzheimer's disease, and distributed samples to physician offices by mail in concert with retail availability.

To expedite the launch, Namenda team members had to be creative in compressing timelines, prioritizing the most essential elements of the launch, and streamlining processes. This required cooperation, communication, and team flexibility. Successfully launched late February 2004, Namenda became the number 2 product in the Alzheimer's category in less than three months.

The challenges of a product launch can be daunting, and when those challenges must be met in a shortened timeframe, it is critical to the success of the product and to patients in need that all members of the team are fully integrated. The Forest Namenda teams, both internal and external, demonstrated the spirit, cooperation, and flexibility that such an unprecedented effort required.

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