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THE MAGNIFIER Issue #59.5, September Supplemental, 2007

Newsletter from the Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 531313 Henderson, NV 89053
<http://www.eyesight.org>

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Today, October 11, 2007, Genentech is notifying ophthalmologists of a change to the distribution of Avastin. After November 30th, 2007, the drug must be ordered directly from an authorized wholesale Genentech distributor, rather than by a compounding pharmacy. (A compounding pharmacy is one which breaks the drug down into smaller doses from the original vial and then delivers it repackaged to the physician.)

When you read about this change in the media and the blogs (and you will), understand that the new procedure will not remove Avastin from the marketplace, and it is not being initiated in order to make Avastin more difficult or expensive to obtain. Also, since hospital physicians are unaffected by the change, the current head-to-head trials of Avastin and Lucentis will not be affected. Physicians in community private practice will probably be the most affected, but it should not affect your care.

As you know, Avastin (a cancer drug) is not manufactured or approved for use in the retina. Many retinal specialists, however, are using it off-label for treatment of choroidal neovascularization, as in wet AMD and myopic MD. The main reasons for the change in distribution are 1) the FDA's concern with repackaging the drug, which allows its unintended use, and 2) expiration of 1-year contracts between Genentech and the compounding pharmacies, which temporarily allowed this procedure while Lucentis was becoming established.

If you would like to learn more about this, here is where you can read the letter being sent to physicians:

<http://www.gene.com/gene/features/avastin/letter-to-physicians.jsp>

I hope this will help your understanding when the news begins to break over the next few days.

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CONTACTING MDF

To speak to a support representative directly, you may call 1-888-633-3937. If you reach our voice mail, please speak slowly and distinctly.

ORDERING BOOKS & TAPES

When purchasing items from Amazon.com, please remember to use the MDF search box located at <http://www.eyesight.org/Books/books.html>. By simply originating your search from our website, Amazon rewards the Foundation with a small commission from each product you order. Thank you.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS:

Please make checks payable to Macular Degeneration Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 531313, Henderson, Nevada 89053, or you may use your credit card on our web site

<http://www.eyesight.org/Donations/donations.html> . Your contributions make our services available as a support system for macular degeneration patients in the following ways:

1. We provide toll-free lines for personal contact assistance.
 2. We mail brochures and other printed materials upon request.
 3. We support an award-winning web site that provides the latest up-to-date information.
 4. We fund research proposal grants to provide therapies for both the wet and dry form of AMD.
- Contributions marked "research" are used 100% for research.

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MDF was founded in 1992 by Edmund J. Aleksandrovich Ph.D (a victim of macular degeneration). It provides MD patients and their families with the information necessary to understand the disease, the latest news concerning ways to cope with the disease, and supports the efforts of researchers to find a cure.

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