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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WORLD OSTOMY DAY

(October 5, 2002)

TO FOCUS ON A COMMON, YET SELDOM DISCUSSED TOPIC

Surgery is never a subject we like to deal with, and when that surgery involves bowel or bladder diversion it simply does not get talked about. Until now.

On October 5, 2002, the United Ostomy Association (UOA) is joining with other health care organizations from the Global Community to present World Ostomy Day.

According to Ann Favreau, president, United Ostomy Association, "The purpose of this event is to get people out of their comfort zones and to start talking about ostomy surgery, Crohn's disease, and ulcerative colitis among other things. There are advances being made in all of these areas that need to be shared with both the medical community and the general public—particularly with people living with an ostomy."

To increase the awareness of ostomies, the UOA, supported by ConvaTec, a Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, will host a series of Ostomy Education Seminars to update the medical health care community on the latest care developments.

Included in the seminars—to be conducted initially in Houston, Texas, October 17; Salt Lake City, Utah, October 31; and Miami, Florida, November 16, will be presentations to increase awareness and understanding of the latest advances in bowel and bladder diversions, including management and pouching techniques, psychosocial implications, coping strategies, reimbursement issues, product access, and local resource identification.

Bowel or bladder diversion surgery is relatively common in the United States, involving nearly 75,000 patients each year. There are several conditions that might require ostomy surgery, including colorectal or bladder cancer, chronic ulcerative colitis, and Crohn's disease, as well as congenital anomalies.

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Although these surgeries do involve body changes, they do not permanently or significantly alter lifestyles. The examples of people with ostomies living quality lives are many, including a farmer who has continued running for fitness after his surgery, and just completed his 11th marathon. A full life with an ostomy was a reality for a former NFL kicker who hit career highs after surgery. These are just a few of the stories of how people can get back into life after ostomy surgery.

“The important point to remember is that bowel and bladder diversion offers new hope for many people, and that there have been real advances in this area within the past several years that further improve quality of life, from psycho-social implications to new products to medical reimbursement,” said Favreau.

ConvaTec, a division of the \$19 billion pharmaceutical and related health care products company Bristol-Myers Squibb, has a toll free number, 1-800-422-8811, and Web site, www.convatec.com, to help people learn more about the company, ostomy care, and other related health topics.

The United Ostomy Association is a volunteer-based health organization dedicated to providing education, information, support and advocacy for people who have had or will have intestinal or urinary diversions. UOA services include a national conference, *Ostomy Quarterly* magazine, patient care guides, annual Youth Rally, and Web site, www.uoa.org. Local services are provided by 440 chapters across the country that offer regular meetings, newsletters, and a patient visiting service. For additional information contact UOA at 1-800-826-0826.