This May NOF will celebrate National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month in conjunction with a new campaign, called *Healthy Bones, Build Them For Life*. As the nation’s leading voluntary health organization solely dedicated to promoting lifelong bone health and fighting osteoporosis, our goal is to reduce the widespread prevalence of osteoporosis and associated fractures and to find a cure for the disease through programs of awareness, education, advocacy and research. This exciting new campaign will give NOF a platform to continue to address the vital need for increased education for the awareness, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis while working to make bone health a reality and a priority for everyone.

*Healthy Bones, Build Them For Life* will help NOF increase awareness of osteoporosis and bone health among women and men of all ages and backgrounds and to address the vital need for increased education for the awareness, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis. This campaign will focus on educating our ENTIRE population on the importance of bone health and osteoporosis prevention, including nutrition, lifestyle choices and exercise. This year’s campaign will feature TV PSAs on ABC 7/WJLA-TV in the Washington DC area, a live patient education webinar, special events, grassroots outreach and more.

Our hope is that the next generation of Americans will be armed with the necessary steps to keep their bones healthy and strong for a lifetime. Our hope is to increase awareness among the male population and educate them that osteoporosis is common among men. Our hope is to reach pre- and post-menopausal women and spread the message that osteoporosis is a disease that is preventable and treatable.
Health Care Reform Improves Access to Osteoporosis Tests

On behalf of the 44 million Americans, 10 million of whom have osteoporosis and another 34 million who have low bone density which puts them at risk for the disease, NOF applauds the US Congress and the President for temporarily remedying a major problem for osteoporosis diagnosis and treatment.

By Congress passing and the President signing the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act,” HR 3590, Americans now can continue to have access to Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DXA) testing, the imaging procedure accepted as the gold standard for preventing, diagnosing and treating osteoporosis. HR 3590 mandates Medicare to reinstate the rate of reimbursement for this test to not less than 70 percent of 2006 rates and would provide for a study and report by the Institute of Medicine on this issue.

NOF’s President Robert Recker, MD, said, “We appreciate the support of our congressional champions, particularly Senator Blanche Lincoln (AR) and Representative Shelley Berkley (NV), who recognize the public’s need for continued access to appropriate healthcare for osteoporosis. Along with them, for more than three years, NOF, its advocates and other interested groups battled to reverse Medicare cuts to DXA reimbursement. These cuts made it difficult for physicians to continue to offer bone density testing in their offices, jeopardizing patient access to osteoporosis care.”

We thank everyone who communicated with their Members of Congress to make their views known on this issue. Because of you, we have achieved a victory for the improved bone health of all Americans.

Advocates Raise Awareness of Osteoporosis and Bone Health on Capitol Hill

On March 16 NOF brought together patients and health professionals from around the country to meet with Members of Congress on Capitol Hill to raise awareness of the physical and economic impact that osteoporosis and poor bone health have on the nation. Strong Voices for Strong Bones on Capitol Hill brought together NOF volunteer support group leaders and other community leaders as they shared their stories and asked Congress to protect patient access to osteoporosis testing, create a national bone health program and increase research funding. NOF plans to bring patients and health professionals together on Capitol Hill again in April and June.

Each May during National Osteoporosis Awareness & Prevention Month, NOF hosts our annual Silhouette Awards Dinner. Advocates, patients, healthcare professionals, corporate partners and Congressional leaders gather to bring awareness and support to NOF’s programs and services. Join us in Washington, DC on May 19, 2010 as we celebrate Healthy Bones, Build Them For Life® and honor these champions for strong bones:

■ Advocates and philanthropists, Rolanette and Berdon Lawrence
■ Academy Award-winning actress, Cloris Leachman
■ Congressional champion, Senator Blanche L. Lincoln
■ Renowned bone health expert, Lawrence G. Raisz, M.D.

Call (800) 231-4222 or visit www.nof.org/awardsdinner2010 for more information or to register!
My ophthalmologist recommended that I take a supplement with 25,000 international units (IU) of vitamin A every day for my eyes. I've read that too much vitamin A is harmful to the bones. Is this true?

Vitamin A is important for your health and can benefit your bones as well as your eyes. On the other hand, too much vitamin A can be harmful to your bones and may increase your chance of having osteoporosis.

The two most common forms of vitamin A are retinol and beta-carotene. Retinol is nearly ready for the body to use. It is found in foods that come from animals, such as eggs, liver, certain fish and milk products. Vitamin A is sometimes added in the form of retinol to foods, such as cereals.

Beta-carotene is found in plants, including many green vegetables and yellow or orange fruits such as carrots, kale, mangos, spinach and sweet potatoes. Your body changes beta-carotene to retinol in order to make it available for your body to use. Therefore, many people are able to meet their vitamin A needs by eating a balanced diet that includes fruits and vegetables.

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for vitamin A (as retinol) is 2,310 IU for women and 3,000 IU for men. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has also set Tolerable Upper Intake Levels (UL) for vitamin A in the amount of 10,000 IU for women and men. This is the highest daily amount that is believed to be safe for your health.

Supplements that provide vitamin A in the form of retinol above 10,000 IU may lead to bone loss or other health problems. However, research suggests that a higher amount of vitamin A in the form of beta-carotene is safe. Make sure that your supplement provides beta-carotene, and not retinol, in the amount recommended by your ophthalmologist.

People should be careful about taking supplements of fish liver oil with vitamin A and a multivitamin at the same time. Always check the label of your multivitamins and any supplements that you take for the amount and type of vitamin A. Remember that eating a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables is the best way to get most vitamins and minerals. Speak with your healthcare provider if you aren’t sure about your specific vitamin needs.

Weather and the Economy Change – Charitable Gift Annuities are Assured

It’s been quite a winter, with varied weather and uncertain economic climate and forecasts. As you consider your financial planning and charitable support, you may want to consider the certainty of guaranteed income and potential tax benefits of a Charitable Gift Annuity.

A Charitable Gift Annuity helps our mission and can provide the donor with guaranteed annual income, often more than other financial investments such as CDs, bonds, or mutual funds, and potential taxable benefits.

In an uncertain economy with uncertain financial returns, a Charitable Gift Annuity, or other means of charitable giving, may be beneficial for you and provide a way to support the programs and services of NOF. You can help make a difference in others’ lives today, for future generations and in your personal financial planning.

For information on how a Charitable Gift Annuity, bequest, or other ways of charitable giving can be of benefit to you and NOF’s mission, please call 1(800) 231-4222, visit www.nof.org/plannedgiving, or email Brock Field, Senior Development Officer, at brock.field@nof.org. We are thankful for your support.
WHAT’S NEW AT NOF?

Healthy Bones, Build Them For Life® Webinar Series

NOF invites you to take part in a series of free educational webinars. You’ll be able to listen to and view live presentations led by NOF affiliated health professionals. If you don’t have internet access or a computer, you can listen to the presentation by phone.

The webinar series will cover a variety of osteoporosis-related topics including risk factors, testing, nutrition, exercise, treatment and more. You’ll also have an opportunity to submit questions to the presenter.

The first webinar, How Strong Are Your Bones, will be presented by NOF’s Clinical Director Felicia Cosman, MD, on Thursday, May 27, 2010 from 2:00-3:00 pm, EST. To learn more or to register, visit www.nof.org or call toll free (866) 702-3278.

Osteoporosis Health Exchange on WebMD

NOF and WebMD have partnered for the launch of a new Osteoporosis Health Exchange, an online discussion forum for the general public. The Osteoporosis Exchange will feature NOF affiliated health professionals who will engage in discussions with community members, answer questions and share accurate evidence-based information about osteoporosis and bone health with community members. You can visit the Osteoporosis Exchange and sign up to participate by visiting http://exchanges.webmd.com/osteoporosis-exchange.