

# Update on the Chronic Management of COPD: Optimizing Patient Outcomes

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## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. In 2004, about 11.4 million Americans had COPD, costing the nation nearly \$37.2 billion. Acute exacerbations contribute significantly to the overall costs of treating COPD and have a negative effect on the progression of the disease. For these reasons, it is critical to manage COPD appropriately and to prevent acute exacerbations. It is expected that over the next 20 years, the number of patients with COPD will increase dramatically because of increased use of tobacco worldwide and the changing age structure of populations. This swell in the number of patients with COPD will not only affect the health care system, but also the families and communities who care for them. The potential benefit of drug therapy has raised interest and optimism and has shown potential in relieving troublesome symptoms, including dyspnea, and in reducing acute exacerbations.

This program will provide an overview of COPD, including a description of the natural course of disease progression. The program will describe current pharmacological approaches as well as the importance of the health care team in managing the disease across the continuum of care. The role of the health care team in teaching patients about COPD, available devices, and self-management will be discussed. Patient cases and audience response system technology will be used during this interactive session to illustrate strategies for long-term management of COPD.

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