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Actor and Comedian Howie Mandel Joins *Take Cholesterol to Heart*, a National Education Campaign from Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc.

- *Mandel is teaming up with Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc. to share his statin story to help inspire others*
- *Take Cholesterol to Heart empowers people with high cholesterol to talk to their healthcare provider before stopping their statin*
- *Visit TakeCholesteroltoHeart.com to learn more about Mandel's heart health journey*

MONTGOMERY, Ala., May 8, 2018 – Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc., a company focused primarily on cardiometabolic diseases, today announced that actor and comedian Howie Mandel is joining its ***Take Cholesterol to Heart*** campaign to help inspire others to speak up before they stop their statin.

High cholesterol affects over 100 million Americans and is a major risk factor for heart disease – the leading cause of death in the United States. To lower cholesterol, doctors often prescribe a class of medications called statins, but despite the proven benefits of statin therapy in reducing heart disease, at least 50 percent of people who are prescribed statin medication discontinue it within one year after treatment initiation, and consistency of use decreases over time.¹ Mandel was one of those people.

Through ***Take Cholesterol to Heart***, Mandel shares his personal journey to manage his high cholesterol since being diagnosed 30 years ago, in which he ultimately opened up to his doctor and found the right statin for him. The campaign offers people the motivation and tools to have an open dialogue with their doctor about their statin so they can ensure they are taking the right treatment for them, and stick with this life-saving medication.



With this partnership, Mandel joins fellow **Take Cholesterol to Heart** ambassador Regis Philbin, a TV icon and heart disease survivor. Like Philbin, Mandel is passionate about motivating people to take their high cholesterol seriously, and has this simple message to share: *you may not see it or feel it, but unmanaged high cholesterol can have potentially deadly consequences, so speak up to your doctor today.* Multiple statins are available, and by proactively having a frank discussion with their doctor, people can find a statin that fits their individualized needs.

“Talking to people has always come naturally to me, but I found it difficult to tell my doctor that I wasn’t comfortable taking the statin he first prescribed, and I stopped taking it without telling him,” says Mandel, who is about to kick off a new season as judge of NBC’s America’s Got Talent. “I couldn’t get my cholesterol levels down through diet and exercise alone, and the stakes were too high to take any chances, so I finally spoke up and worked with my doctor to find a statin that works well for me. Through **Take Cholesterol to Heart**, I hope that people can learn from some of the mistakes I’ve made, and feel empowered to speak up to their doctor *before* they stop their statin.”

The importance of educating patients with high cholesterol is supported by recent clinical research. Notably, a study looking specifically at prevalence rates of cholesterol screening, awareness and statin therapy among U.S. adults with severe elevations in cholesterol found that less than 40 percent are being prescribed appropriate drug treatment.²

For those patients who do begin statin therapy, there remains a significant gap in understanding. **ACTION: The Statin Survey** (Understanding Patient Adherence and Concerns with Statins, and Medication Discussions with Physicians) examined why many people stop taking statins despite the risks, revealing that just 33 percent say their healthcare provider (HCP) explained why that particular statin was being prescribed. In addition, just 21 percent of patients say that their HCP told them that there are different types of statins available.³ Like Mandel, nearly one in four current statin users and 62 percent of past statin users reported having challenges with the first statin they took³, demonstrating the need for further HCP-patient conversation to help those with high cholesterol identify the right statin for them.

“We are extremely proud to welcome Howie Mandel to the **Take Cholesterol to Heart** campaign, as his experience with stopping and starting statin therapy echoes the journey of the many Americans who struggle to find the right statin for them,” said Craig A. Sponseller, MD, Chief Medical Officer at Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc. “The ACTION data emphasize that patients with high cholesterol should feel empowered to ask their physician questions about statins, which are shown to make a life-saving difference in helping them to manage their blood cholesterol, ultimately reducing their risk of cardiovascular disease. This conversation is critical to select the most appropriate statin for each patient.”

Take Cholesterol to Heart features new videos from Mandel, who discusses his journey to get his high cholesterol under control, and shares his advice for people who aren’t taking their diagnosis seriously or struggle to open up to their doctor. Personal videos from Philbin detailing his heart health journey are also available on the website, along with other resources that include:

- Discover Your Statin Status Quiz
- Doctor Discussion Guide
- Cholesterol Facts
- Heart Healthy Recipes: Smart Substitutions for Cooking



- **ACTION: The Statin Survey** data

Learn more about the campaign at www.TakeCholesteroltoHeart.com and www.Facebook.com/TakeCholesteroltoHeart.

About High Cholesterol

High cholesterol is defined as total cholesterol ≥ 240 mg/dL based on guidelines from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). When cholesterol levels rise, thick, hard buildup can occur in the artery wall, narrowing arteries and slowing down or even blocking blood flow to the heart and brain. High cholesterol is a major risk for stroke and heart disease (the leading cause of death in America). It can be lowered through a healthy diet, exercise, and by taking a medication (like a statin) as recommended by a physician.

About the *Take Cholesterol to Heart* Campaign

The goal of *Take Cholesterol to Heart* is to increase public understanding of high cholesterol as a key risk factor for heart disease and to provide strategies that empower people to stay on their doctor-prescribed statin medication. There are multiple statins available, and by maintaining an open dialogue with their doctor, people can help ensure that they are on an individualized treatment regimen including the statin that is most appropriate for them. For more information about the campaign and resources, visit www.TakeCholesteroltoHeart.com.

About ACTION: The Statin Survey

Harris Poll conducted **ACTION: The Statin Survey** (Understanding Patient Adherence and Concerns with Statins, and Medication Discussions with Physicians) online on behalf of Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc., from July 7 to August 4, 2017, among 5,014 US adults age 45 or older who had been diagnosed with high cholesterol and had ever used a statin to treat high cholesterol. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation

The Foundation serves as the philanthropic arm of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Its mission is to advance the values of Family Medicine by promoting humanitarian, educational, and scientific initiatives that improve the health of all people.

About Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc.

Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, Inc., headquartered in Montgomery, AL, is focused primarily in the area of cardiometabolic diseases. Established in September 2008, Kowa Pharmaceuticals America focuses its efforts on the successful commercialization of its current and near-term portfolio of pharmaceutical products and business development activities. For more information about Kowa Pharmaceuticals America, visit www.kowapharma.com.

¹ Cohen JD, Brinton EA, Ito MK, Jacobson TA. Understanding statin use in America and gaps in patient education (USAGE): an internet-based survey of 10,138 current and former statin users. *J. Clin Lipidol.* 2012;6(3):208-215.

² Bucholz EM. Prevalence and Predictors of Cholesterol Screening, Awareness, and Statin Treatment Among US Adults With Familial Hypercholesterolemia or Other Forms of Severe Dyslipidemia (1999-2014). *Circulation.* 2018; DOI: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.117.032321.

³ Data on File: ACTION: The Statin Survey.

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