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## **For Immediate Release**

### **Menopause 2002: It's Not The Same Old Story**

#### **The New Century Highlights Natural Herbal Products as Further Research Puts Hormones on Trial**

New York, NY—February 2002—An alarm went off in April 2000 when the Women's Health Initiative notified its 27,500 volunteers, ages 50-79, that in the first two years of the Heart and Estrogen/Progestin Replacement Study (HERS), there had been an increase in heart attacks, strokes, and blood clots among healthy women taking HRT, compared with those on the placebo. It may be that this finding, among others, has led a growing number of women to turn towards herbal products for menopausal symptoms. In fact, last year according to the natural products trade publication, Natural Foods Merchandiser, as many as 35% of menopausal women sought out herbal products for these symptoms. Further, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), fewer than one in three menopausal women choose traditional hormone replacement therapy (HRT) due to a perceived lack of confidence in its benefits and fear of increased side effects. The Natural Foods Merchandiser puts this number at 12%.

Valerie Otto, president of Becoming, Inc. and manufacturer of an herbal product for menopause relief, called Oöna, concurs, "We exhibit at many Medical Doctor's conferences to introduce our product. Most of the time, we are the only herbal product represented and often receive the most traffic. The reason is, products like Oöna are what patients are asking for, and while some M.D.'s have some legitimate concerns about herbal products, they realize their patients are taking them anyway and they want to guide the process."

Interestingly, women have shied away from HRT in spite of what they hear about hormone replacement therapy improving their overall health and well-being. As longer term and better-designed studies continue, it may be that womens' intuitions are once again not to be ignored. Issues surrounding the long-term health benefits versus the long-term risks of HRT appear more uncertain than originally thought.

The American Heart Association has reversed its support of HRT, proposing that women with cardiovascular illness avoid the therapy. More disconcerting findings include a National Cancer Institute study that reported an eightfold greater risk of developing breast cancer in post-menopausal women on combination therapy (compared with those on estrogen alone) and a link between combination HRT and a rare type of breast cancer that develops in the chambers of the breast that contain the actual milk gland.

According to E. Conrad Hicks, Jr., MD, a well-respected OB-GYN specializing in menopause, "When you consider the explosion in research data we now have along with the increasing options available for managing the menopause transition, it is clear that a one-size-fits-all approach is outmoded and is, in my opinion, a disservice to our patients. As physicians we need to think "out of the box" and carefully consider each woman's transitional experience, her risk factors, and her desires in crafting just the right program for her. It is my experience that a large percentage of women are drawn to and want to consider natural treatment alternatives. Oöna offers the standardization, quality and consistency that as a physician I want to make available to my patients. It is already finding a prominent place in menopause management for my practice."

It's important that both women and doctors know that there are natural alternatives available, like Oöna, that can be trusted " both in terms of formulation and manufacturing. Oöna is a combination of two natural herbal extracts" black cohosh and chaste tree berry. Black cohosh is known to work in part on the first half of a woman's cycle by helping the body level both estrogen and luteinizing hormones.\* Chaste tree berry works in a similar fashion but more on the second half of the cycle to lower prolactin levels which in turn raises progesterone. As a result, Oöna alleviates a broad range of menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, breast tenderness, heavy bleeding, sleep disturbances, headaches, fatigue, vaginal dryness and more, as well as PMS symptoms.\*

Many forms of black cohosh and chaste tree lack standardization, and this sets Oöna apart. "Unfortunately, there are many companies that entered the market during the rapid growth of the natural products industry in the 90s that do not produce good quality products, so you have herbal products that run the price range of \$2-\$30, and consumers are confused", says Otto. "It is the mentality of manufacturers on the fray to buy the cheapest ingredients and often this means there are products on the shelf without enough herb to have an effect. A company must have high standards to make a good product. For example, we put experienced brainpower into our formulations, a lot of effort choosing our extracts and suppliers and then we test for consistency on top of that. This is why we feel confident introducing ourselves to the medical community."

And physicians appear to be noticing. MenopauseRX.com, a site dedicated to the subject, has done a feature on Oöna with a note from John Sunyecz, M.D., F.A.C.O.G., "I applaud Ms. Valerie Otto at Becoming, Inc. for formulating Oöna. Oöna combines these two natural, herbal products in a very effective supplement for women to use during the perimenopause and menopause transition. I have also reviewed the manufacturing process utilized to produce Oöna, and am impressed with the quality standards. I look forward to recommending Oöna to my patients who are experiencing the troublesome symptoms of the menopause transition."

Created by Becoming, Inc., a mail-order catalog company catering to the needs of women undergoing cancer treatment, Oöna is now available in all-natural tablets at independent pharmacies, over the Internet at [www.oonahhealth.com](http://www.oonahhealth.com) and toll-free at 1-888-596-5154.

\* These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose or treat any disease.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: FOR MORE INFORMATION, PRODUCT SAMPLES, PHOTOGRAPHS, OR TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW, CONTACT: FANNY KIM AT 212-989-9788 OR [FKIM@OONAHEALTH.COM](mailto:FKIM@OONAHEALTH.COM).