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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOY HEART DISEASE WAKEUP CALL NEW STUDY SHOWS SOY WORSENS CARDIOMYOPATHY

Santa Fe, NM: Research published this week in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* indicates that soy foods could seriously harm patients afflicted with cardiomyopathy, a heart condition that affects 1 in 500 Americans and is the leading cause of death in young athletes.

“It's a myth that soy prevents heart disease,” says Kaayla T. Daniel, PhD, author of *The Whole Soy Story: The Dark Side of America's Favorite Health Food*. “Millions of Americans have been eating soy in the mistaken belief that it's a heart-healthy food. In fact, scientists have long known that soy does not reliably lower cholesterol and that it raises other risk factors, including homocysteine levels. This new evidence that soy worsens cardiomyopathy will be a wake up call to the public.”

The study, performed by University of Colorado scientists, showed that male mice carrying the mutation for hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) were severely affected by soy protein-based feed and suffered from progressively enlarged heart muscles, and eventual heart failure though female mice were “relatively unaffected.” However, when the afflicted mice were switched to a diet of the milk protein casein, their condition “improved markedly.” Lead author Leslie Leinwand, PhD, concluded “At least in mice, diet can have a more profound effect on heart disease than any drug that we could

imagine.”

The findings are likely to send shock waves through the soy industry, which has profited mightily from marketing the myth that soy prevents heart disease. “Sales of soy protein products have increased 200 percent since November 1999 when the FDA allowed a soy-prevents-heart disease health claim,” says Dr. Daniel. “Few people realize that in allowing the health claim the FDA disregarded warnings from its own expert scientists and based its decision almost entirely on just one study – a 1995 meta-analysis by James W. Anderson, PhD, that was funded by soy industry giant Protein Technologies International. This Fall at the Sixth International Symposium on the Role of Soy in the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Disease in Chicago, however, Dr. Anderson conceded that most studies since 1995 have reported 'less impressive' results.”

The U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality also recently struck a blow against the validity of the FDA's soy and heart disease health claim. In a report issued in September, the agency concluded that much of the research carried out on soy is “inconclusive,” that soy products appear to exert “a small benefit on LDL cholesterol and triglycerides” but that those effects are of “small clinical effect in individuals.”

“Clearly soy is not the solution for people at risk for heart disease,” says Dr. Daniel. “*Possible* benefits are outweighed by *proven* risks. People at risk for cardiomyopathy should avoid it altogether. Better safe than sorry.”

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