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WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - MAY 12, 2008

Amid limited public pharmaceuticals information, WQA offers answers

LISLE, Illinois — Following an Associated Press report that indicated the public is rarely told when researchers find pharmaceuticals in their drinking water, the Water Quality Association is offering answers to common questions.

Some municipalities have released information. For example, the City of Chicago announced last week that trace amounts of unregulated chemicals have been found in local water. However, the AP story reported that many water providers and researchers have been reluctant to inform the public when pharmaceuticals are discovered in local sources.

WQA offers an online "fact sheet" with answers to the issue of pharmaceuticals in water. It is available at wqa.org, under media/press releases. It includes the following information:

· Filtering systems in the home provide the highest technology available for treatment of drinking water. Less than two percent of all water consumed is ingested by humans, making these "point-of-use" systems the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

· While utilities are required to meet safety standards set by the U.S. EPA, home filtering systems act as a final contaminant barrier and can further purify water for drinking.

· While specific product performance standards have not yet been developed for pharmaceuticals, many point-of-use technologies have proven effective for some of emerging contaminants. Nano-filtration and reverse osmosis systems removed drugs tested by the Colorado School of Mines at full-scale facilities in Arizona and California. Activated carbon, distillation, ozonation, and advanced oxidization have likewise shown promise in removing many of these contaminants. Individual manufacturers can also test products for specific pharmaceuticals if they choose.

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· According to Utah State University Extension, up to 90 percent of oral drugs can pass through humans unchanged. These often then move through wastewater into streams and groundwater. It is generally cost prohibitive for utilities to use systems such as nano-filtration, long contact activated carbon, and reverse osmosis. However, these technologies have proven successful at removing many contaminants in home water treatment systems.

· In addition to pharmaceuticals, water quality experts are examining other emerging contaminants, such as those found in personal care products and pesticides. These are often referred to as endocrine disrupting chemicals. Home filtering systems have also been proven to treat threats such as lead and mercury.

· WQA provides Gold Seal certification for products that remove a variety of contaminants.

· Consumers can learn about different treatment systems and find locally certified dealers by visiting the WQA Web site's Gold Seal and Find A Professional features.

· More information is available at WQA's Water Information Library online, which includes a search feature.

The Water Quality Association is a non-profit international trade association representing the residential, commercial, industrial and small community water treatment industry. WQA is a resource and information source, a voice for the industry, an educator of professionals, a laboratory for product testing, and a communicator with the public. WQA has more than 2,500 members nationwide.

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