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RELEASE
August 26, 2009

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Does it Run in the Family? Tool Guides Collection of Life-Saving Information
Free Online Customizable Family Health History Tool Unveiled

WASHINGTON – August 26, 2009 – [Genetic Alliance](http://GeneticAlliance.org) today announced the launch of a free online customizable family health history tool at www.doesitruninthefamily.org. The *Does It Run In the Family?* tool was developed so anyone can create personalized booklets about health for their families and communities. Designed for organizations, but useful for individuals and families, the tool allows users to personalize family health history booklets with stories, photos, quotes, local resources, interview questions, and specific health condition information. The *Does It Run In the Family?* booklets explain why family health history is important, how to talk about it, and outlines health conditions that run in families. It is a complement to other tools – such as the U.S. Surgeon General’s *My Family Health Portrait* – that collect health information.

“The sooner we understand the link between our family’s health and our own, the sooner we can take steps to live longer, healthier lives,” said James O’Leary, chief innovation officer of Genetic Alliance. “Family health history leads to conversations about health, helps healthcare providers diagnose and treat conditions, and can give us information about our personal risk for specific conditions. Understanding your family’s health history can help you and your healthcare providers map your route to a healthier future. This free tool makes it easy to begin collecting and sharing your family health history.”

In 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveyed over 4,000 people. Ninety-seven percent thought that it is important to know your family health history, but only 30 percent had ever collected health information from their family members. Genetic Alliance and partners created the original paper-based *Does It Run in the Family?* toolkit to help people easily collect and share their family health history information with relatives and healthcare providers.

The same materials are not always useful for every individual, family and community. For this reason, the online extension of the printed toolkit allows users to create customized materials for any group of people that has something in common, including: a family name, geography, job, culture, race or ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other health condition, or a shared interest. The printed toolkit and web-based tool were developed under a cooperative agreement with the Health Resources and Services Administration.

“Duke University has invested in employee health and wellness, creating a unique opportunity to incorporate family health history into an existing, accessible and sustainable program of health education, prevention and promotion,” said Julianne O’Daniel, Associate in Research at the Duke Institute for Genome Sciences & Policy. “The *Does It Run In the Family?* online tool is intuitive and easy to use, allowing the user to tailor relevant messages for his or her unique group or purpose. The vast majority of Duke staff who helped pilot the booklets through focus groups and

surveys reported that family health history is very important to their health, and 97 percent of survey respondents indicated the conditions described in the booklets were personally important.”

Access the tool at www.doesitruninthefamily.org today! You can order your customized books (for the cost of printing and shipping) or download them to your desktop for free. Print them yourself or distribute them electronically; through email or by posting them on your website.

The *Does it Run in the Family?* tool is customizable with information from family, friends and your community. Collect their stories, photos and quotes to fill in the booklet template. For questions or technical assistance, please email fhh@geneticalliance.org or call 202-966-5557. Know your family health history, it can save your life!

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About Genetic Alliance

Genetic Alliance transforms health through genetics, promoting an environment of openness centered on the health of individuals, families, and communities. Genetic Alliance brings together diverse stakeholders that create novel partnerships in advocacy; integrates individual, family, and community perspectives to improve health systems; and revolutionizes access to information to enable translation of research into services and individualized decision making. For more information about Genetic Alliance, visit <http://www.geneticalliance.org>.