



***NACC & CICRA Announce the Launch of the
Can't Wait Card Campaign***

**Charities Campaign to Unlock
High Street Loo Doors**

26th May 2006, Cranleigh, Surrey. Imagine having the worst case of gastroenteritis you have ever suffered. What would you do if you needed access to toilet facilities whilst on the high street with only one minute's warning to find a loo? Would there be a public toilet available? Often there won't be. Would you ask the retail shop assistants to allow you to use their staff toilets or would the worst thing imaginable happen? Would you suffer the massive embarrassment of an 'accident'? This real life challenge can be faced on a daily basis by people living with the inflammatory bowel conditions, Colitis and Crohn's disease.

In a move to address this issue the UK's two leading Crohn's and Colitis charities - NACC for adults and CICRA for children – have joined forces to call for greater awareness and recognition of their Can't Wait Card scheme. NACC and CICRA provide their 33,000 members with Can't Wait Cards for situations where there are no public toilets nearby. The Cards explain that the Card-holder needs a toilet urgently due to their illness and ask that they be allowed to use the retailer's private toilet facilities quickly.

Aiming to improve access to high street retailer staff toilets, the Can't Wait Card campaign will be launched during Colitis and Crohn's Week from the 17th to the 25th June 2006 - with the backing of *Fame Academy* voice coach Carrie Grant who herself has Crohn's disease.

Carrie makes the plea, "There should be access to toilets on the High Street for all people suffering from Crohn's Disease and Colitis. I long for a time when every shop in this nation is on board and recognises the card instantly."

The Can't Wait Campaign is supported by a recent NACC survey which revealed that 50% of the 1,700 responding members admitted to having suffered an accident during the previous 12 months. Although over 77% of respondents said that the Can't Wait Card is a very important help when communicating the urgent need to use a toilet to shop assistants, the survey also highlighted that the Can't Wait Card is not formally recognized by many retailers and this can lead to embarrassment and further delay in locating a toilet.

Sadly there have been a number of cases where access to a toilet has been denied. David Bensusan, the

father of 13 old Amy, a CICRA member, explains, "More retail staff need to be aware of the Can't Wait Cards. Amy and I were waiting to go to a hospital appointment and had parked in a convenient shopping precinct opposite the hospital. When Amy said that she needed 'to go' we ran for the nearest toilets which were in the shops. We arrived at the first shop only to find that the assistant and her supervisor needed management authorization to allow Amy to use their toilets. This meant us waiting for a manager to be found but we were fast running out of time. We raced off to another shop which thankfully allowed Amy quick access but the whole episode could have been horrible, especially for Amy!"

The Can't Wait Card Campaign will centre on the education of retail staff, aiming to increase both their understanding and awareness of the Card. The hope is that the Can't Wait Card will be more readily identified by staff and accepted by the majority of retailers throughout the UK.

NACC and CICRA also want to make people living with Colitis and Crohn's disease aware that, as well as the Can't Wait Card, they are eligible to apply for a Radar key, giving them access to Disabled toilets that are kept locked.

Richard Driscoll, Director of NACC, and Shirley Illsley, Director of CICRA, explained why the charities have come together for this campaign. "Colitis and Crohn's Disease are often first diagnosed in children or young adults and as there is no cure, people have to live with the conditions for the rest of their lives. The need to find a clean, properly equipped toilet quickly is common to all our members, especially when their disease is active. If we can increase awareness of the Can't Wait Card and know that more retail outlets will accept it without question, then members will feel more reassured that they can do everyday things like shopping with less worry and potential embarrassment."

Individual retailers who are willing to accept the card, whether they are high street chains or individual shops, can find out more about the Scheme and offer their support at www.cantwait.org.uk

National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease (NACC)
Daytime Information Line 0845 130 2233 & NACC-in-Contact Line 0845 130 3344
Website www.nacc.org.uk

Editor's Notes

NACC provides a valuable support network and information resource for people and families affected by Colitis and Crohn's Disease as well as raising significant funds for research. The 70 NACC Groups across the UK enable members to share information and experiences. The Daytime Information Line is available to members and non-members alike who have queries about all aspects of their disease. The NACC-in-Contact Line offers members a chance to speak to a trained volunteer with Colitis or Crohn's Disease. Membership of NACC is open to anyone who has Colitis or Crohn's Disease, their friends and families, health professionals and anyone who wishes to support the charity. Membership costs £12 in the first year, £10 thereafter.

**For more press information on NACC Colitis and Crohn's Week 2006 please contact:
Sarah Rogers or Polly Tipton, tel: 01483 548886 & 0780 1654661 & info@healthcare-pr.co.uk**