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PADMA LAKSHMI AND DR. TAMER SECKIN, MD, LAUNCH ENDOMETRIOSIS FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

Nonprofit Dedicated to Education, Early Diagnosis and Treatment of "Silent Epidemic" That Affects 10 Million Women, Adolescent Girls; Org.'s First Annual Fundraising Ball Occurs April 20, 2009

NEW YORK, NY -- April 6, 2009 -- Padma Lakshmi and Dr Tamer Seckin today announce their partnership to form the nonprofit organization Endometriosis Foundation of America (EFA), www.endofound.org. Endometriosis affects nearly 10 million women and adolescent girls in the United States and can cause debilitating menstrual periods, infertility and health concerns. Ms Lakshmi, an actress, author and host of *Top Chef* has been treated for this health condition by Dr Tamer Seckin, MD, a laparoscopic surgeon and renowned endometriosis specialist, and together have decided it's time to bring attention to this important issue. The EFA will make its formal debut during its first annual fundraising event, the "Blossom Ball", on Monday, April 20, 2009 in New York City set to include a silent auction, seated dinner and dancing to raise funds to help combat this "silent epidemic".

"Women are having hysterectomies, suffering from infertility and lifelong pain which could all be avoided with proper education about this frequently misdiagnosed disease. Endometriosis is completely treatable but most doctors don't even know how to look for it," says Ms. Lakshmi. "I went through years of chronic pain until I met Dr. Seckin who literally changed the quality of my life. I have been treated for the disease and I am now completely healthy and free from the pain and stress it caused and the effect it had on every part of my life. I owe this to Dr. Seckin and I feel I owe it to young women to educate them so that they don't have to go through what I did."

"Needlessly, proper care is stifled and suffering from this ailment (endometriosis) is widespread because of common, societal prejudices and 'taboo subject' notions, which can result in a woman or adolescent girl

who doesn't have the language to describe troubling symptoms with a doctor. Frankly, there's misinformation in the medical community," says Dr. Seckin. "But endometriosis is treatable--even curable--if addressed early enough. Too often it may not be diagnosed until a decade after it begins."

Adds Dr. Seckin, "Whether it's our mother, sister, daughter or other loved one, we all know someone with endometriosis."

Dr. Seckin is one of the field's most highly regarded U.S. surgeons, with experience and skill to address the ailment. Through increased awareness and education among the general public and medical professionals as well as research initiatives and legislative advocacy, the Foundation is committed to improving affected individuals' lives by early endometriosis detection, intervention and treatment.

EFA is the first United States organization of its kind founded by a medical professional. Its inaugural is scheduled to occur Monday evening, April 20, 2009, at Prince George Ballroom. For info on the "First Annual Blossom Ball" go to <http://endofound2009.org/>.

About Endometriosis and Treatment for It

During monthly menstruation, the female body based on hormonal fluctuations sheds the endometrium or uterine lining (the process commonly known as a "period"). In women who have endometriosis menstrual fluids leak back into the body in areas outside of the uterus, have no way to exit and accumulate on the bladder, top of the vagina or other nearby organs, leading to the development of scarring and fibroid-like nodules. This causes symptoms that vary from severe cramping to chronic pelvic pain, severe painful periods, infertility, and pain with sex, among additional complications.

Often women "manage" their discomfort for years with powerful painkillers and hormones, but these only mask symptoms of the condition. What's more, many patients are incorrectly informed by their doctors and treated for symptoms -- but not endometriosis, which consequently causes a long delay in treatment. This dangerous result has led to many "hit or miss" surgeries and thousands of unnecessary hysterectomies. Laparoscopic Excision Surgery (deep removal of all the disease) is one effective, less invasive option and is ideally performed by experienced, specialized surgeons with dedicated, multidisciplinary medical teams. The EFA will help create organized networks of specialists and support the establishment of endometriosis centers for excellence nationwide.

For more information or to make a tax-deductible donation to the Endometriosis Foundation of America, please visit www.endofound.org

About the Founders

Padma Lakshmi is known internationally as an actress, food expert, model and award-winning author. 2009 will be a busy year for Ms. Lakshmi with a new namesake jewelry line coming out in May, her return as host of Bravo's successful television series *Top Chef*, and as the new face of Pantene's Nature Fusion line. Ms. Lakshmi established herself as a food expert early in her career, having hosted two successful cooking shows (including the Food Network's *Padma's Passport*) and writing a best-selling cookbook *Easy Exotic*, for which she won the International Versailles Event for best cookbook by a first-time writer. Ms. Lakshmi followed this success with the publication of her second cookbook *Tangy, Tart, Hot & Sweet*, a larger endeavor filled with over 150 recipes from around the world and intriguing personal memoirs.

Tamer Seckin, MD, is ranked among America's Top Surgeons and Gynecologists, and over two decades has established himself internationally as a leading specialist in Advanced Laparoscopic Surgery for the treatment of endometriosis, fibroids and associated pelvic pain. Dr. Seckin is noted for his expertise and skill in Excision Surgery, the gold standard therapy for endometriosis and fibroids, holds a patent in this field and has worked in partnership with world famous laparoscopic surgeons Dr. Harry Reich and Dr. C.Y. Liu in New York City. He passionately pursues thorough treatment of even the most challenging pathologies without leaving visible scars and, to that end, is recognized as a pioneer in Natural Orifice Surgery, the next generation of surgical challenge and choice.

Dr. Seckin serves on the board of the International Society for Gynecologic Endoscopy, and is a member of the American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the European Society of Reproductive Endocrinology, the Society of Laparoscopic Surgeons, The American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopy, The American Fertility Society, The American Society for Reproductive Medicine, The Society of Reproductive Surgeons, The New York Gynecological Society and The Society of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility.