PRESS RELEASE

“We all have a part to play in making sure the NHS can meet the challenges it faces” says Alan Milburn

- AbbVie’s new Live:Lab™ programme launches today and aims to improve the nation’s health through addressing the ‘Fear of Finding Out’ - focusing on prevention
- Men and those who are single are the most likely to postpone seeking medical advice
- Half of invited adults do not take up their free NHS Health Check
- New short film fronted by former Secretary of State for Health Alan Milburn explores how this fear manifests itself in people’s lives

MAIDENHEAD, UK, 4 May 2017; 00.01 – AbbVie, a global biopharmaceutical company, today announced the launch of its kind partnership programme aimed to help people engage more with their health, improve their wellbeing and reduce the burden on the NHS. AbbVie’s Live:Lab™ project aims to address the barriers which are causing people to delay or avoid seeking medical attention.

Live:Lab complements NHS England’s Five Year Forward View by focusing on improving prevention, aiming to help place the NHS on a more sustainable footing. An evidence review in partnership with think tank 2020health has highlighted the ‘Fear of Finding Out’ as an area where little work has as yet been done to address this barrier having a negative impact on the nation’s health.

The review found that nearly a third of UK adults do not take the relevant steps to improve their health because of this fear and men are more likely than women to be affected, they also tend to endure symptoms for longer before seeking medical attention. Men identified higher levels of embarrassment and a fear that going to the doctor could make them appear less masculine, resilient or strong.

Currently, only half of English adults invited for NHS Health Checks take up the offer, despite NHS Health Checks being estimated to save the NHS an average of £176m over 15 years due to disease prevention and early detection. The report found that single people are most likely to avoid attending health checks, with individuals who are married more likely to seek medical advice when needed.

The Live:Lab™ project aims to uncover why people, particularly those in middle age, are not seeking medical advice when they should and what can be done to persuade them to behave differently.
Alan Milburn, Former Secretary State for Health and Chair of the AbbVie Live:Lab™ project says: “The Fear of Finding Out is an unrecognised syndrome that is causing damage to thousands of people. It also places strain on an already burdened NHS because too many patients end up presenting with serious health problems having delayed getting help earlier. The sustainability of the NHS relies on more people doing more to look after their own health. The Live:Lab project is working with some of the best brains from the technology and health industries to come up with solutions that can empower more people to do so. They – and we – all have a part to play in making sure the NHS can meet the challenges it faces.”

AbbVie’s Live:Lab™ launches with the release of a new video, which sees Alan Milburn meet with individuals in their middle age who confess that the ‘Fear of Finding Out’ means that they have neglected their health, including:

- Tony, a 52-year-old freight train driver, who suffered a heart attack six years ago and admits to being fearful when he undergoes his bi-annual compulsory work health check. He has had previous health problems from being homeless when he was younger, and worries that if he were to have anything wrong with him, then he could be faced with losing his job that he loves and has done for 30 years.
- Polly, who is 45 and has her own upholstery business, has undergone two operations on her hips in recent years and admits that she put off going to the doctor due to the fear of diagnosis and the potential impact that being ill could have on her business and as a single mum to two small children.
- David, aged 54, is a professional musician and admits to not living a healthy lifestyle because of his job; including smoking, drinking and eating late at night. His father suffered from prostate cancer, and hid his symptoms from his family and avoided medical attention. When his cancer was diagnosed, it has progressed considerably and he died two weeks later, aged 63.

Matt Regan, UK General Manager, AbbVie comments: “Preventative health is part of our responsibility as a biopharmaceutical company. The longer we ignore symptoms in the hope they will ‘go away’, the more likely we are to face a far more serious problem or complication. Everyone recognizes that early detection and diagnosis of illness is an important step to alleviating the strain placed on the NHS by chronic disease What we need are new ideas and that’s why we have set up these unique Live:Lab™ collaborations. We are calling on other organisations and individuals to show their support to help make the whole healthcare ecosystem more sustainable.”

David (51, London), who admits to having a ‘Fear of Finding Out’ says: “I am notorious for putting off going to see the doctor. Last time I was at the surgery, my GP was visibly surprised to see me. I know it’s an imaginary crutch but I tell myself that ‘what you don’t know can’t hurt you!’ - my classic avoidance tactic.

“I’d rather not know if there was something wrong with my health and just carry on blissfully enjoying life. With a loving wife, four sons, three daughters and a career in the entertainment
industry which depends on my good health, I’m wary of going to the doctor and being told something’s wrong."

Search ‘Live:Lab’ for more information or visit www.live-lab.co.uk.

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Notes to editors

- Case study interviews available on request
- Visit www.live-lab.co.uk to watch the short film
- Please download images and the film here: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hnkeri840v5upjq/AADDNsQosaY2UkyYP-je-pSoa?dl=0

About AbbVie

AbbVie is a global, research-based biopharmaceutical company formed in 2013 following separation from Abbott Laboratories. The company’s mission is to use its expertise, dedicated people and unique approach to innovation to develop and market advanced therapies that address some of the world’s most complex and serious diseases. Together with its wholly-owned subsidiary, Pharmacyclics, AbbVie employs more than 28,000 people worldwide and markets medicines in more than 170 countries. For further information on the company and its people, portfolio and commitments, please visit www.abbvie.co.uk

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