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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

November 16, 2011

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HSIA QUESTIONS LINK BETWEEN PARKINSON DISEASE AND SOLVENT EXPOSURE

Arlington, VA (November 16, 2011) – The Halogenated Solvents Industry Alliance, Inc. (HSIA) urges considerable caution when interpreting the findings of the Goldman et al., study titled Solvent Exposures and Parkinson Disease Risk in Twins, which was published online November 14, 2011 in the Annals of Neurology. The study design utilized a relatively-small population of white all-male twins who had jointly entered military service during World War II and where one of the twins was subsequently diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD).

Although the paper states that “this is the first confirmation of a significant association between TCE [trichloroethylene] exposure and PD risk in a population-based study”, this conclusion was made without any actual measured chemical exposure data. Chemical exposures were “inferred” based on occupational and hobby histories from the age of 10 forward and an assumed solvent exposure level based on particular activities. For 46-percent of the PD group the information was provided by a “proxy respondent”, described as a spouse, a twin brother or another sibling. Only ten out of 99 individuals from the PD group and three of 99 from the twin control group were even classified as being exposed to TCE.

Given the limitations in the study, including the absence of confirmed solvent exposures, HSIA believes that it would not be appropriate to draw conclusions from this study about a causal association between solvent exposures and PD. As noted by one of the coauthors, Dr. Caroline Tanner, the research is limited by the small number of individuals studied. “It will be important to replicate these results in additional populations with well-characterized exposure histories”, she commented.

HSIA and its member companies remain committed to the safe and responsible use of our chemicals. TCE can be handled and used safely given today’s advanced technology and methods. Users of TCE should follow all applicable regulations, as well as the information contained in the Material Safety Data Sheet. In many industrial applications, TCE is the solvent of choice due to its stability, high boiling point and low flammability. HSIA stands behind the need to use good science, based on facts and data, to determine scientific findings.