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**FOUNDATION FINALIZES STRATEGIC PLAN
AIMED AT REDUCING *VIBRIO VULNIFICUS* RELATED ILLNESSES**

Tampa, Florida – The Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. has finalized a Strategic Plan aimed at reducing the number of *Vibrio vulnificus* related illnesses linked to raw oyster consumption. The strategies incorporated in the Plan were finalized during the most recent meeting of an Advisory Group comprised of individuals from the Gulf of Mexico oyster industry, state health and marketing agencies, and various NGO's.

“This Strategic Plan and the associated activities will greatly enhance the awareness of *Vibrio vulnificus* within both the medical/health community and at-risk consumer groups,” Foundation Board Member Mike Voisin said today. The strategies included in the Strategic Plan are:

- Contract with and train educational specialists to educate medical/health professionals and the at-risk consumer;
- Expand the number of presentations and booth exhibitions at professional conferences to educate medical/health professionals;
- Conduct/fund a direct mail campaign to educate medical/health professionals;
- Utilize radio and television commercials to broadcast and advertise educational messages to the at-risk consumer;
- Develop new educational materials and expand distribution channels to increase awareness among the medical/health community and at-risk consumer group;
- Place educational advertisements, editorials and articles in selective medical trade journals and magazines to educate medical/health professionals and the at-risk consumer;
- Develop partnerships with major pharmaceutical companies to assist in educational efforts;
- Create a dedicated *Vibrio vulnificus* website to assist in the education of the at-risk consumer;

- Develop and/or expand alliances with various interest groups (i.e., National/State Liver Foundations, National/State Diabetes Associations, State Medical Associations, etc.) to assist with educational efforts; and
- Develop a *Vibrio vulnificus* identifier logo.

“We have started to implement many of the strategies in the plan that will reinforce other educational campaigns already in place. The Gulf of Mexico oyster community is extremely energized about the strategies included in this plan, as they have continuously strived to educate the at-risk consumer about the threat of *Vibrio vulnificus*”, Ms. Jamison, Foundation Executive Director, said. The dedicated *Vibrio vulnificus* website is accessible at the following address: beoysteraware.com and will allow the viewer to download much of the educational materials that have been developed under the Plan.

The Plan is available from the Foundation and can be ordered in print version or can be downloaded electronically from the Foundation website: gulfsouthfoundation.org.

The Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. is a private regional non-profit research and development organization with a general membership and Board of Trustees representing a wide spectrum of the commercial seafood industry throughout the southeast U.S. Through the Foundation, the commercial seafood and fishing industry can collectively identify industry needs, and address those needs through appropriate research and other activities. During its 30 years of continual involvement fisheries related research, the Foundation has worked closely with local businesses, coastal fishing communities, academic institutions, and government agencies on various research and education programs. Since its incorporation in 1976, the Foundation has sponsored and administered more than 600 fisheries-related projects.

For further information, please visit our website at <http://gulfsouthfoundation.org> or contact us by e-mail at gulfsouthfdn@worldnet.att.net.

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