# Rob Lowe Introduces One-To-One Support Network For New Cancer Patients

August 29, 2002
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**LOS ANGELES, August 29, 2002 -**

Rob Lowe, national spokesperson for the By My Side: Taking Charge of Cancer Treatment program, today announced the introduction of a new, innovative one-to-one support network called Voices of Experience designed to address new cancer patients' overwhelming need to talk to cancer survivors who have been through similar experiences.

The new feature, a partnership between biotechnology company Amgen and non-profit organization Cancer Hope Network, provides one-on-one encouragement and assistance to cancer patients and their loved ones on a free and confidential basis through trained support volunteers, all of whom are cancer survivors. Patients and their loved ones can sign up to be matched with survivors by calling toll-free 1-866-By-My-Side (866-296-9743) or logging on to www.ByMySide.com.

The most surprising finding of the new Amgen Cancer Patient Survey of more than 450 cancer patients was that 36 percent report not having any caregiver to whom they could turn for support.

"The caregiver is an incredibly vital resource for patients to have by their side as they start cancer treatment," said Lowe. "It's tough when you hear the word 'cancer' for the first time. My dad, like most patients, had a tough time absorbing information about his disease and treatment when he was first diagnosed. But it helped to have the family involved."

Caregiving Role is Broad and Deep

According to the survey, the role of the caregiver is comprehensive, from talking to patients' doctors (79 percent), helping them make treatment decisions (73 percent), and seeking out information regarding their cancer and chemotherapy (67 percent). Nearly 90 percent of patients report that their support network helped them access the best possible information about their disease and medical care.

Virtually all (99 percent) patients said their support network of people was extremely or very important in helping them get through chemotherapy. The same number agree strongly or somewhat that having people who care about them made them more motivated to get through chemotherapy, and 95 percent said their support network was instrumental in helping them get through the serious side effects of chemotherapy.

"When my dad was fighting cancer, our family pulled together to help him cope with the diagnosis, the chemotherapy and its side effects, but we sometimes felt like we were the first family ever to have gone through the experience," says Lowe. "I wish that we had been able to talk to others who had been through the same type of cancer and treatment and who could warn us that serious side effects, like chemotherapy-related infections, were possible."

Lowe's experiences and feelings are not unique. In fact, according to the survey, 84 percent of cancer patients report that they felt they needed, but were unable to find, several specific types of help at the time of their cancer diagnosis: talking to other people who had cancer, being able to connect with someone else who had been through a similar experience, and getting information on what they or their loved ones might experience.

"The support network helps patients and families look beyond the diagnosis, cope with cancer treatment and its side effects, and start living life to its fullest once again," said Wanda Diak, managing director of Cancer Hope Network. "In short, we strive to make a difference in their fight against cancer."

**About Voices of Experience**
Cancer patients are matched with a cancer survivor based on criteria (type of cancer, stage of cancer, type of treatment, side effects experienced, and psychosocial issues), other considerations (such as age, gender, geographic location) and specific questions or concerns patients might have.

The support volunteers are cancer survivors who want to help others deal with the disease. They have been off treatment for at least one year and have gone through extensive training before their first patient contact.

The conversations between patients and support volunteers are free and confidential and generally occur by phone. A patient may talk to as many support volunteers as he or she needs. The network is not meant to take the place of information or support received from a patient's medical team, and support volunteers are trained to refer patients' questions about medical issues back to their doctors.

Caregivers can also utilize the network to talk to other caregivers.

**About By My Side**

Rob Lowe joined forces with Amgen earlier this year to launch By My Side: Taking Charge of Cancer Treatment, a multi-media education program to raise awareness about chemotherapy-related infections and other chemotherapy side effects.

By My Side offers a wealth of free information on the "visible" side effects of chemotherapy, such as nausea and hair loss; the "hidden" side effects, such as infection and emotional duress; and provides tips on preventing or managing them. The information is available in a booklet by calling toll-free 866-By-My-Side (866-296-9743) or by accessing www.ByMySide.com.

Rob became involved in the program after caring for his father Chuck, who developed a serious infection brought on by chemotherapy. The Lowe family was unaware that infection was a serious and common risk of chemotherapy, or that having an infection would force Chuck to stop his cancer treatment, potentially jeopardizing his chances for success. Infections can also land patients in the hospital, which places them at unnecessary risk

and discomfort, close to others who carry infection, and away from the support and love of families and friends. Hospitalization can be costly and very disruptive to cancer patients because today most cancer patients are not hospitalized for cancer therapy. Additionally, even simple infections like bronchitis can become life-threatening.

Rob Lowe is a paid spokesperson for the By My Side campaign.

**About the Amgen Cancer Patient Survey**

Data shown are reported from a study commissioned by Amgen with two complementary parts and conducted by independent research firms in April and May of 2002. The first part was conducted with a random sample of 301 cancer patients who had undergone chemotherapy within the past two years. The second part involved a random sample of 152 cancer patients with caregivers. These patients were currently undergoing or had undergone chemotherapy within the past two years. The results of the studies can be projected to the U.S. population of cancer chemotherapy patients with an error of +/-5 percent.

Cancer Hope Network is a not-for-profit organization that provides free and confidential one-on-one support to cancer patients and their families by matching cancer patients and/or family members with trained volunteers who have themselves undergone and recovered from a similar cancer experience.

Amgen is a global biotechnology company that discovers, develops, manufactures and markets important human therapeutics based on advances in cellular and molecular biology.

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EDITOR'S NOTES:

Anyone can call 866-BY-MY-SIDE (866-296-9743) or access www.ByMySide.com for free information and materials. The support network will be accessible starting August 29. An electronic version of this news release may be accessed via www.amgen.com.