



Striking the Balance: Community Experts Come Together for High-Level Dialogue on Cancer Care

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Advocacy Leaders, Renowned Physicians, and Actor Patrick Dempsey Spur Dialogue and Inspire Action in First-of-Its-Kind Roundtable Event

CHICAGO , June 5 /PRNewswire/ -- Eminent leaders and thinkers in the cancer community came together yesterday at the 2010 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting for a first-of-its-kind roundtable event. The session, sponsored by Amgen and its *Breakaway from Cancer* (R) initiative, was designed to highlight potential areas for improvement throughout the spectrum of cancer care, and inspire action by establishing several calls-to-action for the cancer community and health policymakers.

Cancer has an enormous impact on individuals, their families and society; in 2009 alone, approximately 1.5 million Americans were newly diagnosed with cancer. The entire landscape of healthcare in the United States (U.S.) is undergoing a legislation-inspired metamorphosis, creating both challenges and opportunities for cancer patients, their caregivers and healthcare professionals. Experts agree that cancer care in the U.S. needs to continue to evolve in order to achieve greater balance and help ensure patients receive the best possible care across every stage of their journey.

Founded in 2005 by Amgen, *Breakaway from Cancer* (R) (BFC) is a national initiative to increase awareness of important resources available to people affected by cancer -- from prevention through survivorship. BFC represents a partnership between Amgen and four nonprofit organizations dedicated to empowering patients and caregivers through education, resources and hope.

The roundtable event featured leaders from each of the four BFC partner organizations; distinguished community and academic oncologists, Drs. Lee Schwartzberg and John Marshall ; and special guest speaker Patrick Dempsey , actor and founder of the Patrick Dempsey Center for Cancer Hope and Healing, who joined the meeting virtually via videoconference. The event was moderated by Susan Dentzer , Editor-in-Chief of Health Affairs and contributor to PBS NewsHour.

"My awakening to the realities of cancer began in 1997 when my mom was diagnosed with ovarian cancer," said Patrick Dempsey . "During her illness I found out how important it is to have access to good, reliable resources to help the patient, family members and caregivers. After this experience, I knew that I wanted to make a difference, to give back to the community that helped my mom through her cancer journey and I have supported the Breakaway from Cancer initiative since 2007. I hope the roundtable discussion held at the ASCO meeting will help spread awareness about the importance of education, support and wellness services to cancer patients."

Discussion at the event focused on each stage of the cancer continuum, and evoked the following calls-to-action:

Prevention and Screening

Most people don't realize the power they possess and don't know that more than half of all cancers could be avoided by lifestyle choices. Prevention is the one area in the cancer care arena that the individual retains the most power and the ability to markedly alter the course of their health - if they choose to.

"In order to mount a successful fight against cancer, it's crucial to focus on people who haven't become patients. We need a more collaborative approach to prevent cancer," Carolyn "Bo" Aldige, president and founder, Prevent Cancer Foundation. "We must help everyone understand that to a large extent, they are the architects of their own health."

A close relative of prevention is screening and early detection of cancer. If cancers can be detected in early stages, the likelihood of successful treatment is far greater. Therefore screening guidelines should be easy for the average person to understand and discuss with their regular health care provider. When debates over screening recommendations are hashed out in public, the science is often lost on members of the public, who sometimes opt to do nothing - a dangerous proposition.

Delivery and Access to Quality Cancer Care

Countless advances in cancer treatment, detection and prevention have transformed the disease that was once considered an automatic terminal diagnosis to one that is often manageable and sometimes curable. However, patients can only reap the benefits of advances if they have reliable access to quality cancer care based on evidence, regardless of where they receive treatment.

"Our nation has realized that doing research at the bench only brings value to society if it can be brought to the bedside and touch the lives of patients, improving their health and wellness," said Nancy Davenport-Ennis , founder and chief executive officer, Patient Advocate Foundation. "We hope the new healthcare reform law will provide benefits to cancer patients by eliminating restrictions on pre-existing conditions and lifetime coverage caps, providing access to care for those who are currently unable to receive it and capping annual out of pocket expenses. We will be monitoring the implementation of the law closely to ensure that the rights of cancer patients are protected."

It is also important that a patient advocate or navigator is available to explain treatment options and next steps - at every step along the cancer care continuum. In addition, patients must receive cohesive, coordinated care that is seamless, affordable and delivered by an integrated, multidisciplinary team that may include oncologists, surgeons, radiation oncologists, nurses, psychiatrists, social workers and nutritionists.

Providing comprehensive, quality care goes beyond simply offering an array of services. It focuses on making those services readily accessible to patients, helping them utilize the services based on their individual needs and guiding patients throughout their journey.

Patient Support and Survivorship

Caring for the whole patient and delivering quality care includes tackling the cancer as well as ensuring the patient's emotional wellness.

Cancer's toll can go beyond the physical impact. It is essential that those fighting this disease are screened to determine whether psychosocial

services are indicated, and that these services are readily available, paid for and fully coordinated.

"We are all dedicated to creating seamless, integrated care and overcoming the silos and fragmentation to make the cancer experience a little easier for families and patients," said Kim Thiboldeaux , president and chief executive officer, Cancer Support Community. "We are committed to ensuring that all patients have access to quality cancer care in this country."

"Each cancer patient should receive a treatment plan complete with a list of potential side effects, a treatment summary of all past treatments and a post-treatment survivorship care plan," said Thomas P. Sellers , president and chief executive officer, National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship. "It is unfortunate that most patients aren't privy to that type of well-coordinated care. We need to empower patients to demand it."

Patients should also be made aware - in a systematic fashion - of the free support and services that are available from advocacy groups (such as those that make-up the *BFC* coalition), but it is important that resources are presented in a way that does not overwhelm the patient.

"This roundtable event was a very important step in creating a venue where leaders in the cancer community could come together to discuss these key issues emerging for patients today," said Stuart Arbuckle , vice president and general manager, Amgen Oncology. "We look forward to continuing to work with the *Breakaway from Cancer* team on initiatives that will continue to drive this dialogue, and inspire action in order to provide patients and their families with the best possible care."

More information about *Breakaway from Cancer* , including valuable resources offered by Amgen's partners, is available at <http://www.breakawayfromcancer.com/>.

About *Breakaway from Cancer*

Founded in 2005 by Amgen as a complementary component to the company's title sponsorship of the Amgen Tour of California , *Breakaway from Cancer* (R) is designed to help empower people affected by cancer. *Breakaway from Cancer* supports the services of four nonprofit organizations: Prevent Cancer Foundation, Cancer Support Community (formed by the merger of The Wellness Community and Gilda's Club), Patient Advocate Foundation and National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship. For more information, please visit <http://www.breakawayfromcancer.com/>.

About Amgen

Amgen discovers, develops, manufactures and delivers innovative human therapeutics. A biotechnology pioneer since 1980, Amgen was one of the first companies to realize the new science's promise by bringing safe and effective medicines from lab, to manufacturing plant, to patient. Amgen therapeutics have changed the practice of medicine, helping millions of people around the world in the fight against cancer, kidney disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and other serious illnesses. With a broad and deep pipeline of potential new medicines, Amgen remains committed to advancing science to dramatically improve people's lives. To learn more about Amgen's pioneering science and vital medicines, visit <http://www.amgen.com>.

About Prevent Cancer Foundation

Prevent Cancer Foundation was started in 1985. Today, it is one of the nation's leading health organizations and has catapulted cancer prevention to prominence. Through healthy lifestyle choices, you can reduce your risk of breast, cervical, colorectal, lung, oral, prostate, skin and testicular cancers.

Since its inception the Foundation has provided more than \$113 million in support of cancer prevention and early detection research, education and community outreach programs. The Foundation's peer-reviewed grants have been awarded to nearly 450 scientists from more than 150 of the leading academic medical centers nationwide. This research has been pivotal in developing a body of knowledge that is the basis for important cancer prevention and early detection strategies. For more information, please visit <http://www.preventcancer.org/>.

About Cancer Support Community

Backed by evidence that the best cancer care includes emotional and social support, Cancer Support Community offers these services to all people affected by cancer. Likely the largest professionally-led network of cancer support worldwide, the organization delivers a comprehensive menu of personalized and essential services. Because no cancer care plan is complete without emotional and social support, Cancer Support Community has a vibrant network of community-based centers and online services run by trained and licensed professionals. For more information, visit <http://www.cancersupportcommunity.org/>.

In July 2009 , The Wellness Community and Gilda's Club joined forces to become the Cancer Support Community. The combined organization provides high-quality psychological and social support through a network of nearly 50 local affiliates, more than 100 satellite locations and online.

About Patient Advocate Foundation

Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF) was established in 1996 as a national 501(c)3 organization with a mission of removing obstacles to accessing health care for people with chronic, life threatening, and/or debilitating illnesses assuring access to care, maintenance of employment and preservation of their financial stability. Through the work of professional case management staff, patients have come to rely upon PAF as the providers of direct mediation, negotiation, and arbitration support. Additionally, educational materials directly related to patients' specific issues are included. PAF specializes in insurance appeals, pre-authorization, coding, billing, social security disability income access (SSDI), and medical debt crisis resolution. For more information, visit <http://www.patientadvocate.org/>.

About National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

NCCS advocates for quality cancer care for all Americans and provides tools that empower people affected by cancer to advocate for themselves. Founded by and for cancer survivors, NCCS created the widely accepted definition of survivorship and considers someone a cancer survivor from the time of diagnosis through the balance of life. Its free publications and resources include the award-winning Cancer Survival Toolbox <http://www.canceradvocacy.org/toolbox>, a self-learning audio program created by leading cancer organizations to help people develop essential skills to meet the challenges of their illness. More information is available at <http://www.canceradvocacy.org> or 1-888-650-9127.

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