

Statement on Senator Christopher J. Dodd (D-CT) from Otis W. Brawley, M.D., chief medical officer, American Cancer Society

ATLANTA 2009/07/31 -Below is a statement from Otis Brawley, M.D., chief medical officer, on Senator Christopher Dodd's (D-CT) announcement that he has early stage prostate cancer.

"Our thoughts and well wishes are with Senator Dodd and his family. Senator Dodd has long been a champion of public health and is a leader in the effort to pass comprehensive health care reform, having assumed the leadership of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on behalf of Committee Chair Senator Ted Kennedy, who is fighting his own battle with brain cancer.

"The American Cancer Society and most other medical organizations involved in the study and treatment of this disease would encourage men to know the potential benefits and the risks of both prostate cancer screening and of prostate cancer treatment before deciding to get screened.

"Recent studies have demonstrated that this is a complicated disease and even the decision whether to be screened should be made after careful thought. Screening does not clearly save lives and many men who get aggressive treatment clearly do not need aggressive treatment.

"If diagnosed, what treatment to get is another difficult decision. Observation therapy, surgical prostatectomy, and radiation (external beam or seed therapy) are all accepted in this disease. Each patient and his physician must weigh the options and often a decision must be made with limited information.

"The American Cancer Society is committed to continue supporting the research needed to finally bring answers to these important questions.

"As with anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer or who has had a family member diagnosed with this disease, we wish the Senator well, and hope that his treatment is effective and that he is able to continue the legacy for which he is so well known."

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