American Cancer Society, National Medical Association Announce Collaboration to Reduce Cancer Disparities

Three-Year Effort to Focus on Development and Delivery of Culturally-Relevant Cancer Information

The American Cancer Society and the National Medical Association today announced a three-year strategic collaboration intended to educate the general public, physicians, and other health professionals about best practices to achieve optimal outcomes in cancer prevention and early detection practices, and treatment among ethnic minority and underserved population groups. This collaboration represents a significant commitment by both organizations to target and eliminate cancer disparities specifically among racial and ethnic minorities by reducing inequalities in access to information and screening services, quality care and treatment, and end-of-life support.

Racial and ethnic minorities can often face numerous obstacles to receiving equal access to quality cancer prevention, early detection and treatment services. Many lack health insurance, live in rural or inner-city communities, have low incomes, and experience language barriers, racial bias and stereotyping. They also tend to receive lower quality health care than whites even when insurance status, income, age and severity of conditions are comparable.

"Promoting increased awareness and understanding of cancer prevention, early detection and treatment to help reduce health disparities is a nationwide priority for the American Cancer Society, said Otis W. Brawley, M.D., chief medical officer, American Cancer Society. "Collaborations with pre-eminent organizations such as the National Medical Association are central to the Society's strategy to reach racial and ethnic minorities with appropriate health information."

"Strategic partnerships with organizations like the American Cancer Society amplify the National Medical Association's ability to touch and impact lives through community action and healthcare provider education," said Nelson L. Adams, III, M.D., president, National Medical Association.

Initial goals for the collaboration include developing and distributing culturally relevant consumer and professional materials that focus on prevention, early detection, and treatment of breast, prostate, and colorectal cancer, as well as proper nutrition and physical activity. The effort will also target faculty and alumni of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, NMA clinical specialty sections, regions, states and local members, community-based organization leaders in the African-American and Hispanic/Latino communities, and large African-American and Hispanic/Latino church congregations nationwide.

This year's collaborative activities also feature a joint cancer symposium called "Collaboration in Addressing Cancer Disparities" for health professionals attending the 2008 National Medical Association Annual Convention and Scientific Assembly, July 26 to 31, 2008. This symposium will take place on Tuesday, July 29 from 9a.m. to 11a.m. ET at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia. More than 5,000 health professionals, including physicians, scientists, nurses, medical students, dietitians, and others are expected to attend. The program will provide an overview of the cancer burden facing ethnic and racial minorities and special population groups, its impact on the health of those groups, current progress being made in cancer care, and a discussion of disparities in cancer care and recommendations for addressing them.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

About the National Medical Association

With nearly 112 affiliated societies throughout the nation and US territories, the National Medical Association represents the interests of more than 30,000 African American physicians and the patients they serve. For 113 years, the NMA has worked for equality in health care, the viability of African American physicians, and the health and wellness of their patients. Through its efforts, the NMA promotes the collective interests of physicians and patients of African descent and other minorities and underserved populations. The NMA carries out this mission by serving as the collective voice of physicians of African descent and as a leading force for parity in medicine, elimination of health disparities, and promotion of optimal health. Visit www.NMAnet.org for more information.

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