New Report Estimates Nearly 19 Million Cancer Survivors in the U.S. by 2024

Growing, Aging Population & Increased Survival Driving Trend

ATLANTA – June 1, 2014 – The number of cancer survivors in the United States, currently estimated to be 14.5 million, will grow to almost 19 million by 2024, according to an updated report by the American Cancer Society. The second edition of Cancer Treatment & Survivorship Facts & Figures, 2014-2015 and an accompanying journal article published in CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians find that even though cancer incidence rates have been decreasing for ten years, the number of cancer survivors is growing. This is the result of increases in cancer diagnoses driven by the aging and growth of the population, as well as the fact that people are living longer with cancer because of earlier cancer detection and more effective treatments.

The three most common cancers among males living with a history of cancer in 2014 are prostate (43%), colorectal (9%), and melanoma (8%). Among women in 2014, the three most common cancers are breast (41%), uterine (8%), and colorectal (8%). While lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death and the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in both men and women, a low survival rate makes it the number eight cancer site represented among survivors. The distribution of prevalent cancers is expected to be largely unchanged in 2024.

Other selected findings:

- The majority of cancer survivors (64%) were diagnosed five or more years previously, and 15% were diagnosed 20 or more years ago.
- Nearly one-half of cancer survivors (46%) are aged 70 years or older, while one in 20 (5%) is under age 40.
- The age distribution of cancer survivors varies substantially by cancer type. For example, the majority of prostate cancer survivors (62%) are aged 70 and older, whereas less than one-third (32%) of melanoma survivors are in this age group.
- By January 1, 2024, it is estimated that the population of cancer survivors will increase to nearly 19 million individuals (9.3 million males and 9.6 million females).

In addition to prevalence estimates, the reports also include data on cancer treatment patterns, survival, and information on common short- and long-term effects of cancer and its treatment for eleven selected cancers. Cancer Treatment and Survivorship Facts & Figures also contains sections on the effects of cancer and its treatment, impairment-driven cancer rehabilitation, palliative care, long term survivorship, the benefits of healthy behaviors, and resources for cancer survivors from the American Cancer Society and other organizations.

“The growing number of cancer survivors in the U.S. makes it increasingly important to understand the unique medical and psychosocial needs of survivors,” said Carol DeSantis, MPH, American Cancer Society epidemiologist and lead author of the reports. “Despite the fact that awareness of survivorship issues has increased, cancer survivors face numerous, important hurdles created by a fractured health care system, poor integration of survivorship care, and financial and other barriers to quality care, particularly among the medically underserved. An important first step in addressing these challenges is to identify ‘best practices’ for the delivery of quality post-treatment cancer care.”

Article: DeSantis, CE; Lin, CC; Mariotto, AB, et al. (2014), Cancer Treatment and Survivorship Statistics, 2014. CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians. Published online ahead of print June 1, 2014. doi: 10.3322/caac.21235.

For more information and resources, see www.cancer.org/survivors