New American Cancer Society Social Network Helps Find Answers

Thousands Have Already Joined WhatNext, a Peer-to-Peer Site for Cancer Patients, Survivors, and Caregivers

ATLANTA — January 30, 2013-- The day someone is diagnosed with cancer is a day they begin a journey filled with many new and sometimes puzzling experiences. While medical experts can provide the details of treatment options and side effects, many patients find that connecting with someone who has been through that experience is particularly valuable. Unfortunately, it has often been difficult to find people who have had similar experiences they are willing to share. The American Cancer Society is changing that with a new online tool called **WhatNext.**

“We know that people who connect to each other in times like this feel more empowered, less anxious, and can approach this crucial time in their lives feeling supported,” said Len Lichtenfeld, MD, deputy chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society. “We’re very glad to provide an exciting new way for people to support each other.”

Whereas websites like Facebook and LinkedIn connect people based on their friends, interests, or professions, WhatNext’s unique patent pending technology connects people based on their specific diagnosis and medical experiences. On WhatNext, people can easily access relevant firsthand experiences posted by others in similar circumstances, share their experiences and get answers to their questions.

There are already more than 10,000 registered users, and many are reporting success. MGM48, a regular WhatNext user with prostate cancer, has found a great match in fellow user MichaelV, who also has prostate cancer. “We compare notes and discuss life with cancer,” he said. “I’m happy to have a live sounding board sometimes. Let's face it, no one outside really completely gets it.” The two men have even met face-to-face to discuss their experiences and support each other.

“People are trying to make sense of a whole universe of new and overwhelming medical information at the same time they are trying to figure out what’s next and stay emotionally strong,” said David Wasilewski, founder of WhatNext. “Our site helps people benefit from the experiences of others who have been there.”

WhatNext is just one of the many ways the American Cancer Society is helping people with cancer every day. The Society also offers many other forms of support, assistance, and information, including free lodging at our Hope Lodge Network, transportation assistance through our Road To Recovery® program, an information hotline with live specialists available all day every day, and more.

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About the American Cancer Society
The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end cancer for good. As a global grassroots force of three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping you stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early, helping you get well by being there for you during and after a diagnosis, by finding cures through groundbreaking discovery and fighting back through public policy. As the nation’s largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing more than $3.8 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, an estimated 13.7 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

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