American Cancer Society gives humans an advantage over cancer with lodging and transportation programs to ease burden of disease

The American Cancer Society today launched a video series highlighting the unmet access to care needs of thousands associated with cancer treatment. The videos showcase the Society's Hope Lodge, which provides cancer patients and their caregivers with a free place to stay when care is far from home, and Road to Recovery, a no-cost service providing transportation by volunteers to and from treatment for those who do not have a ride or are unable to drive themselves.

"Transportation and lodging challenges are a significant barrier to cancer treatment and greatly overlooked," said Raul Duany, senior vice president of corporate communications for the American Cancer Society. "The Society is an important source of support to thousands of cancer patients, easing some of the burdens associated with treatment, and ensuring access to life-saving care."

The impact of cancer on families can be devastating, bringing enormous financial, travel and logistical challenges. One cancer patient requiring radiation therapy may need 20 to 30 trips to treatment in six weeks. A patient receiving chemotherapy may report for treatment weekly for up to a year. And many cancer patients must travel to metropolitan areas for treatment, sometimes requiring extended stays far away from home. Hotel and transportation costs can bring a financial burden that forces patients to forgo treatment.

Last year alone, the Society's Road to Recovery volunteers provided more than 341,000 rides to cancer treatment or medical appointments. During the same year through the more than 30 Hope Lodge facilities across the country and a partnership with Extended Stay America, the Society provided free or low-cost lodging to nearly 44,000 patients and caregivers, saving families more than $36 million in lodging costs.

To create the videos, the Society enlisted the help of high-profile spokespeople whose lives have been touched by cancer:
• Bill Cowher, CBS Host of "NFL Today" who lost his wife to melanoma
• Gilles Marini, actor who lost his father to colon cancer
• Shelley Smith, ESPN correspondent and breast cancer survivor
• Dara Torres, 5-time Olympic swimmer who lost her father to colon cancer

Patients, volunteers and staff share their personal stories of inspiration and highlight the need for more volunteers in communities across the country. The videos highlight how individual actions – whether driving a cancer patient to treatment or providing lodging for those far away from home – are made from the heart with courage, determination and love. Collectively, these actions reveal that more people are surviving cancer than dying from it and humans have an advantage over the disease.

"As a breast cancer survivor, I know that coordinating rides and finding a place to stay during treatment is stressful. Many times, patients have friends and family who are available to take them to and from treatment and provide support and housing, but the American Cancer Society is there to fill a gap when others cannot," said Shelley Smith

Visit cancer.org or call 1-800-227-2345 to learn more about Hope Lodge and Road to Recovery and how you can volunteer or donate to make a difference.