American Cancer Society Statement: Supreme Court Affirmative Action Decision Must Not Erase Years of Progress

ATLANTA, June 29, 2023 – The American Cancer Society strongly believes that today's Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action must not erase the years of progress that has been made to improve diversity within the U.S. medical student population.

Diversifying our nation's oncology health care and clinical research workforce is imperative to dismantle the inequalities that still exist in medical care today. Less than 3% of practicing oncologists in the U.S. self-identify as Black, while only 5.8% self-identify as Latinx or Hispanic. As the nation's population further diversifies in the decades ahead, cancer patients will also be more diverse. Mounting evidence suggests when physicians and patients share the same race or ethnicity, this improves medication adherence and shared decision-making. Patients better understand their cancer risk and patient perceptions of treatment decisions. It is imperative that our future physicians and healthcare professionals reflect this shift to reduce barriers to equitable cancer care.

"Ending cancer as we know it, for everyone, requires collaboration, cooperation, and integrated work to address the entire cancer continuum—from medical education, prevention, and early detection to treatment and survivorship," said Dr. Karen Knudsen, CEO of the American Cancer Society and American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. "ACS will not waver in our commitment to improving the lives of cancer patients and their families by investing to increase diversity in medical education and reducing systemic and structural barriers that impede access to timely and high-quality cancer care, especially among communities that have been historically marginalized who are less likely to be diagnosed early or receive equitable cancer care."

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 100 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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