Leading U.S. Cancer Organizations Unite Against the Global Cancer Burden

New World Cancer Report Released by IARC; U.S. Groups List Six Critical Steps the New U.S. Administration Can Take

Atlanta 2008/12/09 -Despite the recent good news that cancer incidence and death rates for men and women in the United States continue to decline, cancer is projected to become the leading cause of death worldwide in the year 2010, and low- and middle-income countries will feel the impact of higher cancer incidence and death rates more sharply than industrialized countries. The nation's leading cancer organizations joined forces today at an event called Conquering Cancer: A Global Effort, to focus attention on the growing global cancer burden and discuss efforts needed to address the problem. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) released the new edition of the World Cancer Report. The American Cancer Society, the Lance Armstrong Foundation, and Susan G. Komen for the Cure discussed how each organization is addressing the global cancer problem and together issued a call to action for the incoming United States presidential administration and Congress. In addition, a new international documentary film entitled "Cancer Is…" was premiered.

According to the new report, the burden of cancer doubled globally between 1975 and 2000. It is estimated that it will double again by 2020 and nearly triple by 2030. This translates to far greater numbers of people living with – and dying from – the disease. The report estimates that there were some 12 million new cancer diagnoses worldwide this year, and more than seven million people will die from the disease. The projected numbers for the year 2030 are 20-26 million new diagnoses and 13-17 million deaths.

The growing cancer burden includes global increases of incidence of about one percent each year, with larger increases in China, Russia, and India. Reasons for the increased rates include adoption of Western habits in less developed countries, such as tobacco use and higher-fat diets, and demographic changes, including a projected population increase of 38 percent in less developed countries between 2008 and 2030.

In addition to increases in cancer incidence and death rates, the report identifies challenges in cancer care, especially in Africa, where pain management and palliative care are very limited because any use of narcotics is prohibited by law in several countries.

Sharing the stage were John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., chief executive officer, American Cancer Society; Lance Armstrong, founder and chairman, Lance Armstrong Foundation; Hala Moddelmog, president and chief executive officer, Susan G. Komen for the Cure; Peter Boyle, B.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc.(Med), director, International Agency for Research on Cancer; Alejandro Mohar Betancourt, M.D., Sc.D., director, National Cancer Institute of Mexico, and Bill Gregory, a throat cancer survivor.

The American Cancer Society's Seffrin said, "For all of our 95 years the Society has pursued the vow of our founders to eliminate cancer in all humankind. We recognize that cancer strikes without regard to borders or socioeconomic status, and we support cancer control initiatives in more than 20 countries, and fund capacity building and tobacco control grants in some 70 countries – including the launch next week of our tobacco Quitline® in India. It is my hope that by bringing proven interventions to places in the world impacted most by this disease, we can diminish needless suffering and save many lives."

Armstrong explained his foundation's international work, saying, "Since announcing the launch of our international cancer awareness campaign at the Clinton Global Initiative less than three months ago, we are already in discussions with more than 20 nations, NGOs and business leaders to advance this issue. Even in a challenging economy, people realize that with cancer there is progress to be made and prevention measures to be taken."

"Breast cancer alone will be diagnosed in 25 million women over the next 25 years. Susan G. Komen for the Cure already has changed the way we talk about and treat breast cancer in the United States, and we're bringing what we've learned to developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. This 'global health diplomacy' approach, with its focus on better access to care, is already educating and empowering women worldwide, and it is critical if we're to save lives and resolve the growing global cancer crisis," said Hala

Moddelmog, president and CEO of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

Explaining the results of the report, Dr. Boyle said, “The rapid increase in the global cancer burden represents a real challenge for health systems worldwide. However, there is a clear message of hope: although cancer is a devastating disease, it is largely preventable. We know that preventive measures such as tobacco control, reduction of alcohol consumption, increased physical activity, vaccinations for hepatitis B and human papillomavirus (HPV), and screening and awareness could have a great impact on reducing the global cancer burden.”

“We appreciate the opportunity to stand with leading cancer organizations in the United States to make global cancer a priority. In Mexico, we have seen the power of the government working with the NGO’s, and look forward to collaborating globally to conquer cancer,” said Dr. Mohar of Mexico’s National Cancer Institute.

The six call to action steps issued by the three U.S. organizations include: 1) making vaccines that prevent cancer causing infections more widely available to low-income nations, including specifically combating cervical cancer through Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI) efforts to make the HPV vaccine accessible and affordable; 2) committing to a comprehensive tobacco control approach in the U.S., which includes taking measures proven effective in reducing smoking rates and having Congress grant the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to regulate tobacco; 3) ratifying immediately the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the first ever global public health treaty that sets forth comprehensive measures to reduce health and economic impacts of tobacco; 4) supporting efforts of non-governmental organizations to build advocacy and resources, empower survivors and reduce suffering in low- to middle-income countries by working with governments, medical professionals and the corporate sector to enable individuals to adopt healthier behaviors; 5) promoting culturally sensitive risk reduction and education campaigns by leveraging our own successful U.S. efforts to help build capacity of nongovernmental organizations in other countries; and 6) investing in cancer research and expanding access to prevention and early detection measures in the U.S., with a specific focus on increasing federal funding of medical research.

The news conference also featured the domestic launch of a new documentary film series focused on the global cancer problem titled “Cancer Is…” The documentary is narrated by former U.S. President George H. W. Bush, and was produced by France’s Cemil Alyanak, a renowned expert on global health communications.

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 on our global programs, visit www.cancer.org/international.

About the Lance Armstrong Foundation At the Lance Armstrong Foundation, we stand up for the 25 million people around the world living with cancer today. There can be – and should be – life after cancer for more people. That’s why we work to prevent cancer, ensure patients get proper cancer screening and care, support research and help cancer survivors live life on their own terms. We kick in at the moment of diagnosis, giving people the support they need to fight cancer head-on. We find creative ways to raise awareness and end the stigma about cancer that many survivors face. We connect people and communities to drive social change, and we call for state, national and world leaders to help fight this disease. Join us at LIVESTRONG.org.

About Susan G. Komen for the Cure Nancy G. Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1982, that promise became Susan G. Komen for the Cure and launched the global breast cancer movement. Today, Komen for the Cure is the world’s largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the cures. Thanks to events like the Komen Race for the Cure®, we have invested more than $1.2 billion to fulfill our promise, becoming the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to the fight against breast cancer in the world. For more information about Susan G. Komen for the Cure, breast health or breast cancer, visit www.komen.org or call 1-877 GO KOMEN.

About the International Agency for Research on Cancer The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the World Health Organization. IARC's mission is to coordinate and conduct research on the

causes of human cancer, the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and to develop scientific strategies for cancer control. The Genetic Epidemiology Group within IARC conducts large scale case–control studies of specific cancers, and participates in international consortia, in order to ensure that studies have adequate sample size.

To view the webcast replay of this event,

click here.

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