

Statement On the Death of United States Senator Edward M. Kennedy

Statement by John R. Seffrin, PhD, CEO of the American Cancer Society and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Washington 2009/08/26 -“We are truly saddened by the passing of a giant in the area of health care policy -- our friend, U.S. Senator and recipient of the American Cancer Society’s highest award, Medal of Honor and the National Distinguished Advocacy Award, Edward “Ted” Kennedy. Senator Kennedy was a passionate advocate for cancer patients and their families, not just in his home state of Massachusetts, but nationwide.

“Truly one of the great champions in this battle to fight cancer, Senator Kennedy has led a passionate effort against this disease during his more than 40 years in the U.S. Senate, championing health care-related causes from equal access to health care to increased funding for cancer research and screening for early detection.

“Known as the ‘Lion of the Senate,’ Senator Kennedy has fought to bring all the resources of the nation to bear in fighting cancer and other diseases, renewing the war on cancer by introducing a bill to overhaul the 1971 National Cancer Act. Senator Kennedy helped to reign in the tobacco industry with legislation that gives FDA the authority to regulate tobacco products, which was signed into law in June. Senator Kennedy also championed the expansion of the Children’s Health Insurance Program with an increase in the tobacco tax.

“Senator Kennedy was personally touched by this disease long before his own diagnosis, watching his son, Ted Kennedy, Jr. battle bone cancer as a teen, and daughter Kara Kennedy Allen battle lung cancer in 2003.

“We are deeply grateful for Senator Kennedy’s commitment and support throughout his long, illustrious career. He will truly be missed. We express our deepest condolences to Ted’s wife, Vicki, and the rest of his family.”

Senator Kennedy’s doctors indicated that he had a malignant glioma, a type of brain tumor. Below are some facts about this cancer.

- There are many different types of gliomas. Their treatments differ, and can include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and biological therapies, in various combinations.
- Gliomas are uncommon in children; the incidence rate goes up with age and peaks in the age group from 75 to 84.
- About one-third of all brain tumors are gliomas, and about 8 out of 10 malignant tumors are gliomas.
- The American Cancer Society estimates that in the United States in 2009, 22,070 people will be diagnosed with malignant tumors of the brain or spinal cord (12,010 in men and 10,060 in women) and 12,920 people (7,330 men and 5,590 women) will die from these tumors, accounting for about 1.5 percent of new cancer cases and 2.3 percent of cancer deaths this year.
- Overall, the chance that a person will develop a malignant tumor of the brain or spinal cord in his or her lifetime is less than 1 percent (about 1 in 149 for a man and 1 in 186 for a woman). Survival rates vary widely, depending on the type of tumor.

- The cause of most central nervous system tumors is not fully understood. Most brain cancers develop for no apparent reason and are not associated with anything that the person did or didn't do, or with any known exposures in the environment.
- At this time there are no blood tests or other screening exams that can be used routinely to detect brain tumors before they start to cause symptoms. These tumors usually come to light as a result of signs or symptoms the person is having. In most cases, the patient's survival is determined by their age, the type of tumor, and its location.

For more information, please click [here](#).

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation's largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing nearly \$3.4 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, more than 11 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 any time, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

ACS CAN is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage lawmakers, candidates and government officials to support laws and policies that will make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer. For more information, visit www.acscan.org.

David Sampson
Director, Medical & Scientific Communications
American Cancer Society
(213) 368-8523
david.sampson@cancer.org

Steven Weiss
Director, Media Advocacy
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
(202) 661-5711
steve.weiss@cancer.org
