# American Cancer Society Honors Outstanding Innovative Achievements in Palliative Care

## James A. Block, M.D., to Receive Inaugural Pathfinder in Palliative Care Award

ATLANTA 2009/10/14 -James A. Block, M.D., president of J.A. Block Health Associates, will receive the inaugural 2009 American Cancer Society Pathfinder in Palliative Care Award, which recognizes individuals who have demonstrated innovation and ingenuity in their contributions to the advancement of the field of palliative care. The American Cancer Society is committed to advancing the field of palliative care, and the award will be presented on October 13, 2009 at the Kathleen Foley Palliative Care Research Retreat that is part of the Society's partnership with the National Palliative Care Research Center.

Dr. Block has been a strong advocate for the development of palliative care in the United States for more than a decade. He has made significant contributions to promoting palliative care within private sector philanthropy in an effort to promote and secure innovative funding strategies. Dr. Block has been described as an extraordinary mentor and advisor to organizations responsible for the growth of palliative care, such as The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and as a powerful advocate for access to quality health care. He has orchestrated strategic collaborations to promote the field, working extensively with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, to advocate for a prominent role for palliative care policy in the context of health care reform.

"Dr. Block has been an extraordinary advocate for palliative care in this country," said Elizabeth T.H. Fontham, M.P.H., Dr.P.H., national volunteer president of the American Cancer Society. "His work to ensure that everyone has access to high quality palliative care helps patients to have a better quality of life as they face treatment for chronic and sometimes terminal illness."

Dr. Block is the former president and chief executive officer of Johns Hopkins Health System and the Johns Hopkins Hospital, and he also served as adjunct professor of Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University of Medicine, Clinical Associate Professor of Preventive, Family and Rehabilitative Medicine, and adjunct professor of Health Policy Management both at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health and the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. He also served as president and chief executive officer of Case Western Reserve University Hospitals. Dr. Block is a senior hospital advisor to the Center to Advance Palliative Care, and is also a consultant to the Emily Davie and Joseph S. Kornfeld Foundation.

The goal of palliative care is to prevent and relieve suffering and to support the best possible quality of life for patients and their families, regardless of the state of the disease. The American Cancer Society recognizes the serious shortage of researchers in this field, and the Society's Extramural Research Department has partnered with the National Palliative Care Research Center to stimulate research in palliative care by establishing a special program to support innovative research in palliative care. ACS CAN is also a driving force behind federal legislation that would improve pain care research, education, training, and access, and also works in partnerships at the state level to enact laws that expand access to the full range of palliative care services.

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 about $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 anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

Claire Greenwell
Media Relations Specialist
American Cancer Society
404-417-5883
claire.greenwell@cancer.org