Coaches vs. Cancer Suits and Sneakers Awareness Weekend Set for Jan. 29-31, 2010

Basketball Coaches Nationwide Address the Importance of Exercising and Eating Right in the Fight against Cancer

ATLANTA 2010/01/14 -Coaches vs. Cancer® Suits and Sneakers awareness weekend, a collaborative initiative of the American Cancer Society and the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC), is slated for the weekend of Jan. 29-31, 2010. Participating NABC member coaches will wear sneakers instead of dress shoes with their suits during weekend games to demonstrate their support for the American Cancer Society and its vision of a world with less cancer and more birthdays. Basketball fans are also encouraged to wear sneakers to games that weekend to show their support.

This year will mark the inaugural Suits and Sneakers Challenge and Wear Your Sneakers to Work Day as employees of local companies are encouraged to give a $5 or more donation in order to wear their sneakers to work. This effort will raise funds and awareness to save lives from cancer. Companies may also choose to match their employees' donations to double their impact of raising funds. Visit coachesvscancer.org to learn more.

By lacing up sneakers with their suits, college and high school basketball coaches nationwide will spotlight the fact that while cancer remains a major health concern, everyone can take daily steps to reduce their risk of the disease. For those who do not smoke, weight control, exercise and a healthy diet are the best ways to improve health and reduce cancer risk. Obesity has been shown to increase the risk for many forms of cancer, including breast, prostate, and colon cancers and may account for 20 percent of cancer deaths in women and 14 percent in men.

However, according to a 2006 survey, only eight percent of people understand that excess weight is so strongly linked to cancer risk, while more than 80 percent know of the link between overweight and heart disease. Overweight and obesity are of particular concern in minority populations, with higher rates of both reported for Hispanic men and women and for African American women, than for non-Hispanic white adults.

"The personal involvement of these coaches in the Coaches vs. Cancer program creates an invaluable opportunity to reach so many people about how to reduce their risk of cancer, and, particularly, about the important roles that regular exercise and a healthy diet play," said George W.P. Atkins, 2009-10 national volunteer chair, American Cancer Society Board of Directors. "Coaches vs. Cancer continues to be an integral part of the Society's commitment to save lives by helping people stay well, by helping them get well, by finding cures and by fighting back against the disease.

"I am honored to again serve as chair of the Coaches vs. Cancer Coaches Council and to stand alongside my fellow coaches across the country in doing all we can to help the American Cancer Society fight for every birthday threatened by this disease," said **Gary Williams**, University of Maryland head coach. "Suits and Sneakers awareness weekend is a great way to remind basketball coaches and fans alike about taking an active role in reducing our own risk of cancer and in fighting back on behalf of those who face a cancer diagnosis."

In addition to Williams, other active Coaches vs. Cancer Coaches Council members are: **Jim Boeheim** (Syracuse); **Mike Brey** (Notre Dame); **Jim Calhoun** (Connecticut); **Bobby Cremins** (College of Charleston); **Ed DeChellis** (Penn State); **Fran Dunphy** (Temple); **Mark Few** (Gonzaga); **Jeff Gamber** (York College); **Lon Kruger** (UNLV); **Mike Krzyzewski** (Duke); **Phil Martelli** (Saint Joseph's); Oli**ver Purnell** (Clemson); **Orlando "Tubby" Smith** (Minnesota); **Bruce Weber** (Illinois); and **Roy Williams** (North Carolina).

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of college and high school coaches and fans across the country, Coaches vs. Cancer participants have raised more than $55 million since 1993 to help the Society fund groundbreaking cancer research, provide up-to-date cancer information and education, advocate for public health policies that benefit communities, and deliver services that improve the quality of life for patients and their families. Additional information is available at coachesvscancer.org.

Several events throughout 2010 will continue to highlight the productive work of Coaches vs. Cancer, including **Fight Cancer In Style** – an event for coaches' wives during NCAA Final Four weekend, April 3-5 in Indianapolis; the annual **Coaches vs. Cancer Golf Invitational**, June 13-14 at the Oak Hill Country Club in Rochester, N.Y.; and the annual **2K Sports Classic benefitting Coaches vs. Cancer** (12-team nationwide basketball tournament) in November.

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; by 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 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.

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