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**Leveraging the Immune System to Control Cancer**

Cancer Support Community Launches *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Your Immune System and Cancer Treatment*

WASHINGTON – (Aug. 13, 2014) – International cancer nonprofit, the Cancer Support Community announced today the launch of its new *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Your Immune System and Cancer Treatment* program. The program, which includes a fact sheet, an online guide, video vignettes, a series of webinars on key topics and in-person workshops across the country, is designed to help people with cancer understand the rapidly emerging field of immunotherapy for cancer.

“Immunotherapy is one example of the ways in which cancer treatment is becoming increasingly complex,” said Gwen Darien, Executive Vice President for Programs and Services at the Cancer Support Community. “Our goal in the *Frankly Speaking About Cancer* program is to provide people with easily accessible information they can trust and use in their decision making process. These new materials fill an important gap and address a field that is yielding very promising results and is changing rapidly.”

In the last few years, immunotherapy, treatment that uses the body’s immune system to fight cancer, has evolved from earlier forms to become regarded by the research community as a key component of cancer treatment. The rapid surge of progress in this area is the result of research that has led to greatly increased knowledge of the relationship between cancer cells and the immune system. Several immunotherapy drugs have been approved by the FDA to treat melanoma and kidney cancers with numerous clinical trials underway using multiple agents for a wide spectrum of cancer types, including lung cancer, leukemia, lymphoma, bladder, prostate and cervical cancers, among others.

“We have known for a long time that the immune system does respond to cancers, but until recently we have not been able to develop effective treatments that use our body’s natural defenses to fight tumors,” said Kim Lyerly, MD, George Barth Geller Professor in Cancer Research, Duke University Medical Center and member of the advisory board for the *Frankly Speaking About Cancer* program.

“These therapies work both by boosting the overall immune response and by blocking the cancer cell’s ability to deactivate or escape from the immune system. They are complicated and work differently from other treatments that we have used. It’s very important to give our patients the resources to educate themselves about these new options so they can be active participants in their treatment,” said Lyerly.

*Your Immune System and Cancer Treatment* is the latest addition to the *Frankly Speaking About Cancer* series. The new program features video commentary from several national experts on how immunotherapy works, how to cope with the delayed response to treatment that is characteristic of some immunotherapy drugs and the different side effects that people encounter when they take these treatments. The materials also provide advice for patients and families on how to find immunotherapy for cancer or participate in clinical trials using these new agents. The Cancer Support Community plans

a series of patient-oriented webinars on immunotherapy for specific cancer types, including melanoma, lung cancer, leukemia and lymphoma.

“We are excited about the progress being made in using immunotherapy to treat cancer and about the role we can play in helping people with cancer understand and access these important new therapies,” said Kim Thiboldeaux, President and CEO of the Cancer Support Community.

*Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Your Immune System and Cancer Treatment* was developed thanks to an educational grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb and is provided in partnership with the Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation, Free to Breathe, LUNGeVity Foundation and Melanoma Research Alliance with the guidance of an advisory board of cancer experts and patient advocates.

To view a video news release on *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Your Immune System and Cancer Treatment* go to [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_0vrKXYKoI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_0vrKXYKoI)

To visit the *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Your Immune System and Cancer Treatment* website go to <http://www.cancersupportcommunity.org/immuno>

### **About the Cancer Support Community**

The mission of the Cancer Support Community (CSC) is to ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action and sustained by community. In 2009, The Wellness Community and Gilda’s Club joined forces to become the Cancer Support Community. The combined organization, with more than 50 years of collective experience, provides the highest quality social and emotional support for people impacted by cancer through a network of more than 50 licensed Affiliates, more than 120 satellite locations and vibrant online and telephone communities, touching more than one million people each year.

Backed by evidence that the best cancer care includes social and emotional support, the Cancer Support Community offers these services free of charge to men, women and children with any type or stage of cancer, and to their loved ones. As the largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide, the Cancer Support Community delivers a comprehensive menu of personalized and essential services including support groups, educational workshops, exercise, art and nutrition classes and social activities for the entire family. Through cutting-edge psychosocial, behavioral and survivorship research, the Cancer Support Community’s *Research and Training Institute* is helping CSC change the future of cancer care through education and training. The Cancer Support Community’s *Cancer Policy Institute* ensures that the voices of 13.7 million cancer survivors and their families are heard in the nation’s capital and state and local legislatures across the country. In 2013, the CSC network delivered nearly \$48 million in free services to patients and families. The Cancer Support Community is advancing the innovations that are becoming the standard in complete cancer care. So that no one faces cancer alone®.

For more information, please visit [www.cancersupportcommunity.org](http://www.cancersupportcommunity.org)

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