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Significant Percentage of Gastric Cancer Patients Can Be at Risk for Clinical Depression

Over Half of Study Participants Desire More Help with Cancer-Related Distress and Cost of Care

CHICAGO, IL - (June 1, 2017) - The Cancer Support Community (CSC) announced today the results of its study of gastric cancer patients as part of its Cancer Experience Registry, at the 2017 ASCO (American Society of Clinical Oncology) Annual Meeting. Some of the highest ranked concerns raised by respondents included:

- Fatigue (62%)
- Health insurance or money worries (59%)
- Worry about the future (59%)
- Feeling sad or depressed (50%)
- Sleep problems (48%)

Also of note, 39 percent of respondents reported intrusive thoughts about the cost of care. These interruptions to normal thought flow can impact sleep and concentration.

Whereas over half of the patients expressed a desire for more help with emotions related to cancer (57%), long-term side effects (55%), and financial advice/assistance (52%), a significant percentage reported that these and other concerns of this type were not raised by their healthcare team.

Based on the results of the study, it is believed that half of the respondents were at risk for clinical levels of depression and should be further assessed for appropriate follow-up.

“With such a substantial proportion of patients expressing concern about physical symptoms, emotional distress, and financial burden, it is the responsibility of everyone involved in the care and treatment of cancer patients to make them aware that services exist that can help,” said CSC President Linda House. “Using distress screening tools can help identify those who would benefit from psychosocial support.”

“The results of this study are a huge red flag, telling us that people are suffering and that more effort needs to be made to connect patients to resources that can reduce distress and the financial burden associated with a gastric cancer diagnosis,” stated CSC Senior Vice President of Research & Training Joanne S. Buzaglo. “This goes to the core of what is meant by comprehensive cancer care.”

The Cancer Support Community and other organizations offer programs and services that potentially positively impact quality of life, treatment adherence, and other illness outcomes, many at no cost.

The study characterizes cancer-related distress and concerns among survivors of gastric and related cancers and the support survivors receive from their health care team.

The abstract as presented at the 2017 ASCO Annual Meeting Symposium is available online at <http://bit.ly/2roJvTv>.

About the Cancer Support Community

As the largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide, the Cancer Support Community (CSC) is dedicated to ensuring that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community. CSC achieves its mission through three areas: direct service delivery, research, and advocacy. The organization includes an international network of Affiliates that offer the highest quality social and emotional support for people impacted by cancer, as well as a community of support available online and over the phone. The Research and Training Institute conducts cutting-edge psychosocial, behavioral, and survivorship research. CSC furthers its focus on patient advocacy through its Cancer Policy Institute, informing public policy in Washington, D.C. and across the nation. In 2016, the CSC network delivered nearly \$45 million in free services to patients and families. For more information, please call the toll-free Cancer Support Helpline at 888-793-9355, or visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org. *So that no one faces cancer alone*®

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