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Study Shows People with Cancer Face Challenges with Access to Care

Cancer Support Community report at ASCO Quality Care Symposium indicates barriers to care

ORLANDO, Fla. – (Mar. 3, 2017) – In a study presented by the Cancer Support Community today at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Quality Care Symposium, 68 percent of patients reported not discussing costs with their health care team prior to treatment, even though 43 percent of patients reported that their out of pocket costs were higher than expected.

Additional findings include:

- **Cost containment measures are resulting in delays in care.** 25 percent of patients experienced delays, such as delays in scheduling a test or medical procedure (63.5%); receiving a referral (40.9%); getting responses from their health care team (34.7%); and obtaining a prescription (22.2%).
- **Patients are making trade-off decisions that may impact overall quality of care and outcomes.** Approximately 22 percent of patients chose not to get some of the health care services they need due to high out of pocket costs. In particular, 18 percent of patients said costs prevented them from filling prescription drugs to treat their cancer.
- **More than half of patients are not receiving social and emotional support services that could address their access-related concerns.** More than half (53.3%) of those surveyed indicated that they had not received social and emotional support as part of their cancer care. Among those who did not receive social and emotional support services, 67.5% reported they would have liked to receive such services.

“In today’s complex and ever changing health care landscape, access to comprehensive, quality care continues to be a challenge for patients. Even with health reform efforts, our study shows that patients need to be fully engaged in their care to ensure quality is not compromised,” said Kristen Santiago, senior director of policy and advocacy at the Cancer Support Community.

The study, conducted in late 2016, included the responses of 1,218 people who currently have or who have had a history of cancer. Respondents were asked about their access to insurance, services, and providers as well as direct and indirect costs of care.

The full poster and abstract as presented at the ASCO Quality Care Symposium are available online at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org.

The full “Access to Care in Cancer 2016: Barriers and Challenges” report is available online at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Access.

About the Cancer Support Community

As the largest professionally led nonprofit network of cancer support worldwide, the Cancer Support Community (CSC), including its Gilda's Club affiliates, 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. 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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