



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact:

Emily Martin

(202) 650-5371

Emily@cancersupportcommunity.org

**Non-adherence to Medication Doubles when Patients have Depression Risk and Financial Burden**

Poster at the American Society of Hematology Annual Meeting  
Reveals Correlation between Finances, Distress and Treatment Adherence

SAN FRANCISCO - (Dec. 7, 2014) - A new study from the Cancer Support Community's Research and Training Institute showed that patients with chronic myeloid leukemia experiencing financial burdens coupled with a high risk for depression were almost twice as likely to have poor drug adherence than patients with financial burdens alone.

The study, presented today at the American Society of Hematology annual meeting, found that among patients who experienced both financial hardship and a high risk of depression, 57% practiced poor treatment adherence, meaning they skipped or missed doses of oral cancer medication and postponed filling prescriptions. Among patients who experienced financial hardship but were not at risk for depression, 21% had poor adherence. Similarly, 18% of patients who were at risk for depression but did not have financial burdens had poor drug adherence.

"We have known that the financial challenges associated with cancer can have a strong negative impact on people living with cancer, even influencing their adherence to treatment. We now know that this effect on treatment is emphasized when patients are at risk for depression," said Kim Thiboldeaux, president and CEO of the Cancer Support Community. "This study underscores the importance of proactively screening patients for psychosocial distress and delivering appropriate follow-up intervention as a routine part of comprehensive care."

The study also found that, because of the medical costs of cancer:

- 38 percent used co-pay assistance programs
- 35 percent cut grocery expenses
- 33 percent depleted savings
- 30 percent used pharmaceutical assistance programs
- 20 percent borrowed against or used money from retirement

The data was collected from 397 patients with chronic myeloid leukemia in the [Cancer Experience Registry](#), a research initiative with the goal of collecting, analyzing and sharing information about the experience and needs of patients and their families throughout the cancer journey. The Cancer Experience Registry currently has more than 7,000 members, and nearly 500 are part of the Cancer Experience Registry: Chronic Myeloid Leukemia, a partnership of the Cancer Support Community and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

The full poster can be accessed [here](#).

The Cancer Experience Registry: Chronic Myeloid Leukemia is funded by Pfizer Oncology.

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

###