

NEWS RELEASE



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Mississippi Cancer Patients and Their Families to Benefit from American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program at University of Mississippi Medical Center

Program Will Provide Personal Guide to Help Local Cancer Patients Better Navigate Their Cancer Experience

Jackson, Mississippi – August 2011 – The American Cancer Society today launched its Patient Navigator Program at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) Cancer Institute. This is the 42nd Patient Navigator Program site nationwide and the first in Mississippi that is part of a strategic nationwide effort to significantly extend the reach of this innovative program and assist individual cancer patients in negotiating the health care system.

“A cancer diagnosis can be a life-changing experience for patients, their families and their caregivers,” said Angel Strange, quality of life director for the American Cancer Society Mid-South Division. “Our Patient Navigator Program helps patients focus on getting well by providing support every step of the way, from explaining what to expect during treatment, to making sure patients have transportation to and from appointments. Fighting cancer is a difficult, challenging journey; but with the help of trained American Cancer Society patient navigators, people don’t have to go through it alone.”

The American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program directly connects patients to a cancer education and support specialist – known as a “patient navigator” – who, through one-on-one relationships, serves as a personal guide to patients and caregivers as they face the psychosocial, emotional and financial challenges that cancer can bring. The service is free and confidential, and places an emphasis on assisting the medically underserved.

According to American Cancer Society estimates, 14,990 people in Mississippi will be diagnosed with cancer in 2011.¹ The patient navigator program at UMMC is part of a \$10 million pledge by AstraZeneca to the Society to accelerate development of at least 50 new Patient Navigator Program sites over a five-year period (2007 to 2011) in communities throughout the United States.

"The American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program at UMMC will enable us to assist patients with personalized community resources and support," said Beth Feisel, UMMC's patient navigator. "This program proactively reaches patients who are most in need of specialized services and support, providing the critical link to local resources that will improve their outcomes and quality of life."

As the cancer experience is different for each patient, American Cancer Society patient navigators connect patients and caregivers with the most appropriate programs and services to help improve each individual's access to health care and to help them on their journey to get well. Whether it is getting patients and caregivers the information they need to make treatment decisions and better understand their disease, helping them deal with the day-to-day challenges of living with cancer, such as transportation and insurance issues, or connecting them with community resources such as support groups, American Cancer Society patient navigators can provide help throughout the disease continuum – from the time of diagnosis, through treatment, into survivorship. Furthermore, navigators are able to increase treatment compliance and follow-up care.

About the American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program

Formally launched in 2005, the Patient Navigator Program, in collaboration with community-based hospitals and cancer centers, links those affected by cancer to patient navigators who serve as personal guides for patients and their caregivers to help them navigate the cancer experience – with a focus on eliminating barriers to cancer care for the medically underserved. Patient navigators receive national-level training through the American Cancer Society, in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute Patient Navigation Research Program, as well as localized training and opportunities for ongoing education.

There are currently more than 130 American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program sites across the U.S. The American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program is just one of the many American Cancer Society programs that help patients, their families, and caregivers manage the impact of cancer on their lives so they can focus on getting well.

About The American Cancer Society

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; 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.

About University of Mississippi Medical Center

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. University of Mississippi Health Care represents the clinical programs of the Medical Center and includes University Hospitals and Health System and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's citizens. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of

health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at 601-984-1100 or visit us on the Web at <http://publicaffairs.umc.edu/>

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1. American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts and Figures 2011. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2011.

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