

New Myths and Truths About Thyroid Cancer Education Initiative Aims to Shine a Light on the Truths about Thyroid Cancer

Campaign Shares Long-Term Emotional and Physical Impact and Issues Consumer Call-to-Action

WOODCLIFF LAKE, NJ, September 15, 2015 – The Light of Life Foundation, ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association, Inc., and Eisai Inc. today announced the launch of *Myths and Truths About Thyroid Cancer*, an interactive, educational campaign designed to help dispel the myth that thyroid cancer is a “good cancer.” Because most thyroid cancers can be successfully treated, many are told if you are going to get cancer, thyroid cancer is the one to have, which has led to this misperception. However, whether successfully treated or not, the truth is all cancers can have a significant impact on a person's life, beginning with the shock and distress of hearing the word “cancer” at diagnosis. In honor of Thyroid Cancer Awareness Month and the tens of thousands who receive a thyroid cancer diagnosis each year, *Myths and Truths About Thyroid Cancer* illustrates the life-changing realities of this disease.

“As a thyroid cancer survivor, I urge people to stop referring to thyroid cancer as the ‘good cancer,’ as I believe it downplays patients' experiences,” said Joan Shey, founder of the Light of Life Foundation. “I hear time and time again from patients how difficult their diagnosis and treatment were and that their scars are more than skin deep. My hope is that this campaign can educate about the many types of thyroid cancer and change the thyroid cancer conversation.”

“Being part of a community of survivors is very important for people coping with thyroid cancer,” said Gary Bloom, thyroid cancer survivor and co-founder and executive director of ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Association. “ThyCa takes this to heart, which is why we are proud to provide support and resources to the thyroid cancer community. We also know more needs to be done to elevate awareness of thyroid cancer and what patients need in terms of support for the rest of our lives.”

Thyroid Cancer: The Long-Term Physical and Emotional Impact

- Thyroid cancer is the most rapidly increasing cancer in the U.S.
- There are several types of thyroid cancer: differentiated, medullary, and anaplastic thyroid cancers, of which differentiated thyroid cancer, consisting of papillary and follicular types, is the most common, accounting for about 94% of all cases of thyroid cancer. The majority of patients with differentiated thyroid cancer can be successfully treated with surgery to remove part of or the whole thyroid gland and radioactive iodine therapy (RAI), an oral form of radiation that targets and kills thyroid cancer cells.
- However, what many do not know is that because most thyroid cancers grow slowly and can recur in up to 30% of patients even 10 to 20 years after initial treatment, follow-up care is needed to check for cancer recurrence or spread, as well as for monitoring/management of possible side effects of certain treatments. Because thyroid cancer can recur decades later, this care can continue for a lifetime and can be associated with anxiety.
- In addition, patients who have their thyroid removed as part of their cancer treatment must take hormone replacement medication for the rest of their lives.
- Some patients may also experience a challenging post-surgery complication called hypoparathyroidism, a lack of parathyroid hormone, which helps regulate calcium, phosphorus and vitamin D levels in the blood and bones. This can lead to muscle cramps and spasms, brittle nails, dry hair and skin, seizures, and cataracts, among other issues.
- Together, treatment-related effects and the emotional impact of the disease can cause some patients to experience ongoing challenges, including lack of energy, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, weight gain, memory loss, migraines and depression.

Less than 10% of patients diagnosed with differentiated thyroid cancer will progress to metastatic disease. Of those patients, 15-30% will become refractory, or fail to respond to RAI; these cancers exhibit a more

aggressive behavior and are more difficult to treat. Medullary and anaplastic thyroid cancers, which are diagnosed in about 6% of all patients, often require different treatment options and can spread quickly to other parts of the body. Error! Bookmark not defined. Anaplastic thyroid cancer is the most aggressive form of thyroid cancer, with the most severe effects on patient health and overall survival. It is important to ensure that patients are aware of the resources and support available in the thyroid cancer community. The lack of widespread awareness of the long-term complications and severity of this disease may mean some patients, especially those with the most serious forms, never find the support they seek.

“I see patients with advanced forms of thyroid cancer, which can be aggressive, difficult to treat and often require the involvement of an integrated healthcare team,” said Marcia Brose, MD, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of Rare Cancers and Personalized Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania’s Abramson Cancer Center.* “Not all thyroid cancers are the same and it is important that people diagnosed with and treated for thyroid cancer understand their type and treatment. In addition, if initial treatment does not eradicate their disease, they should find a medical oncologist with experience in the treatment of advanced thyroid cancer.”

Since each type of thyroid cancer offers a unique experience and treatment for thyroid cancer is often different from other forms of cancer, patients can feel misunderstood among their family and friends – and even within the cancer community. The *Myths and Truths About Thyroid Cancer* campaign emphasizes the need for patients to have support and resources specific to their experience long after their initial diagnosis.

Supporting Patients through the #TruthAboutTC Social Challenge

People can support patients living with the disease and raise awareness of thyroid cancer by participating in the #TruthAboutTC Challenge. For each person that uploads a photo on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram holding a sign with #TruthAboutTC and tagging friends to participate, Eisai will donate \$1 up to a total of \$50,000 to Light of Life and ThyCa to help the organizations continue to provide resources and support to those living with thyroid cancer, and help improve conversations between patients and their physicians. Thyroid cancer patients can help further raise awareness by also sharing a “truth” about their thyroid cancer experience in their #TruthAboutTC posts.

Patients can visit the Light of Life Foundation at www.lightoflifefoundation.org and ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors’ Association at www.thyca.org for more information on the different types of thyroid cancer, support and resources.

About the Light of Life Foundation

The Light of Life Foundation, Inc. is a national and international non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of the thyroid cancer patient through continuing education of the lay public and the medical community and promoting research and development to thyroid cancer care.

Founded in 1997 by thyroid cancer survivor Joan Shey and a team of leading physicians at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, the Light of Life Foundation has evolved from small patient support groups into a full-fledged national and international network of patients and physicians who are bringing attention to the importance of this disease: the fastest increasing cancer among women and men in the United States. The Light of Life Foundation contributes to the worldwide conversation on thyroid cancer through groundbreaking public awareness campaigns, The Light of Life Honorary Award, the multidisciplinary medical fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, informational patient seminars, patient advocacy research and campaigns, and a robust social media support network. For more information, please visit: www.checkyourneck.com.

About ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors’ Association, Inc.

ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors’ Association, Inc., founded in 1995, is an international nonprofit organization of survivors, family members and health care professionals. Advised by 47 thyroid cancer specialists, ThyCa provides a comprehensive network of services and resources that educate and support patients and their families, share experiences, improve patient-physician communications, raise public awareness of thyroid cancer, and support research for a future free of thyroid cancer.

ThyCa's extensive website provides free educational materials in eight languages, 12 online support groups for each type and situation with thyroid cancer, and more than 120 local support groups in nine countries, a free Low-Iodine Cookbook with over 420 recipes, a Thyroid Cancer Events Calendar, a free weekly newsletter reaching 65,000 people, and opportunities to meet and learn from thyroid cancer experts via videos, webinars, seminars, workshops, and the annual International Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Conference. ThyCa sponsors Thyroid Cancer Awareness Month worldwide each September, as well as year-round awareness campaigns. In addition, ThyCa raises funds for thyroid cancer research and has awarded 54 thyroid cancer research grants to researchers in six countries. For more information on ThyCa, its services and resources, please visit www.thyca.org.

About Eisai Inc.

At Eisai Inc., *human health care* is our goal. We give our first thoughts to patients and their families, and helping to increase the benefits health care provides. As the U.S. pharmaceutical subsidiary of Tokyo-based Eisai Co., Ltd., we have a passionate commitment to patient care that is the driving force behind our efforts to help address unmet medical needs. We are a fully integrated pharmaceutical business with discovery, clinical, manufacturing and marketing capabilities. Our key areas of commercial focus include oncology and specialty care (Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy and metabolic disorders). To learn more about Eisai Inc., please visit us at www.eisai.com/US.

Eisai Inc. has affiliates that are part of a global product creation organization that includes R&D facilities in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as well as a global demand chain organization that includes facilities in Maryland and North Carolina. Eisai's global areas of R&D focus include neuroscience; oncology; metabolic disorders; vascular, inflammatory and immunological reaction; and antibody-based programs.

*Dr. Brose is a paid consultant to Eisai Inc.

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