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THE PANCREATIC CANCER ACTION NETWORK AND 225 ADVOCATES URGE CONGRESS TO SUPPORT A NEW PLAN FOR FEDERAL FUNDING OF PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH

EL SEGUNDO, CA – (March 11, 2008) – The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network today hosts its 2nd Annual Pancreatic Cancer Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. 225 advocates, including patients, survivors and caregivers from across the United States will urge members of Congress to support the organization's *National Plan to Advance Pancreatic Cancer Research*, which seeks \$170 million in federal funding for pancreatic cancer research and outlines a strategic plan to identify early detection methods and ultimately find a cure for this deadly disease. Pancreatic cancer advocates will also call on Congress to increase the National Cancer Institute (NCI) budget for Fiscal Year 2009 by 9.5%. Pancreatic cancer is currently one of the least funded among leading cancer killers with less than 2% of the NCI's annual budget allocated to pancreatic cancer research.

"Our advocates are on Capitol Hill today to raise their voice for over 38,000 Americans that will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer this year," stated Julie Fleshman, Pancreatic Cancer Action Network President and CEO. "We urge Congress to join our fight against pancreatic cancer and change the course of history for this disease by supporting our *National Plan to Advance Pancreatic Cancer Research* and a real increase for the National Cancer Institute."

Scientific progress in pancreatic cancer research has been fatally slow and is reflected in the current statistics. Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the United States, and in 2008, over 33,000 Americans will die from the disease. The mortality is the highest among all major cancers and has continued to increase – even in prior years when overall cancer deaths have decreased.

"The low funding levels that have been allocated to pancreatic cancer research to date have negatively impacted research progress, as well as our ability to attract and keep a dedicated cadre of committed scientists focused on pancreatic cancer research," added Fleshman.

Of the more than 5,000 research grants awarded annually by NCI in 2006, only 134 were categorized by the NCI as at least 50% relevant to pancreatic cancer research. There are currently fewer than 58 principal investigators that have multiple grants or a primary career focus on pancreatic cancer. Young investigators face an even greater problem – the NCI has awarded only five young investigator grants to pancreatic cancer researchers in the last three years.

"We have heard repeatedly from the brightest scientific minds in the country that pancreatic cancer research is an area that holds great promise – the ideas are there, we just need the funds to pursue them," stated Jason Kuhn, Pancreatic Cancer Action Network Chairman of the Board.

Pancreatic Cancer Action Network supporters who are unable to attend Advocacy Day will be able to add their voice to the chorus of advocates on Capitol Hill by participating in a "National Call-In". Details of the "National Call-In" can be found at www.pancan.org.

To learn more about the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, visit www.pancan.org.

About the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network

The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network is the only national organization creating hope in a comprehensive way through research, patient support, community outreach and advocacy for a cure. The organization raises money for direct private funding of research—and advocates for more aggressive federal research funding of medical breakthroughs in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of pancreatic cancer.

The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network fills the void of information and options by giving patients and caregivers reliable, personalized information they need to make informed decisions. We create a sense of hope and community so no one has to face pancreatic cancer alone. The organization helps support individuals and communities all across the country work together to raise awareness and funds to find a cure for pancreatic cancer.

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