

**For Immediate Release:**

June 25, 2013

**Contact:** Shelley Fuld Nasso

[sfuldnasso@canceradvocacy.org](mailto:sfuldnasso@canceradvocacy.org)

214-732-4940

## **Bipartisan Bill to Improve Cancer Care is Introduced in House by Representatives Capps and Boustany**

*Planning Actively for Cancer Treatment (PACT) Act (H.R. 2477)  
would enhance care of millions of Medicare patients*

Washington, D.C. – Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA) and Congressman Charles Boustany, Jr., M.D., (R-LA) today introduced the Planning Actively for Cancer Treatment (PACT) Act (H.R. 2477), which would significantly improve the quality and coordination of care for Medicare patients with cancer. The bill is the top federal policy priority of the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS).

Congresswoman Capps, a nurse, and Congressman Boustany, a surgeon, worked together to prepare the legislation, which encourages physicians and patients to establish a written care plan and better coordinate care among the many specialists often involved in a patient's treatment.

Medicare covers most of the costs of care for more than half of all cancer patients in the United States, at a cost of over \$55 billion each year. Experts say most cancer patients currently do not receive a written plan that explains their diagnosis, prognosis, treatments, and expected symptoms, leaving them to navigate the complexities of a cancer diagnosis without clear direction or knowing what to expect from their care. This can affect the physical and emotional well-being of patients, as well as increase costs due to fragmented care.

“Cancer care is incredibly complex, and medical treatment is only one necessary part of getting through a difficult diagnosis,” said Congresswoman Capps. “Patients should be able to play an active role in deciding among many options, as well as have a clear understanding of what lies ahead. Having a written plan that reflects their wishes, and that can be shared with the entire care team, should be part of all patients' cancer care.”

“Each year, more American lives are affected by the disease known as cancer. Unfortunately, cancer treatment plans vary among health care providers,” said Congressman Boustany. “The PACT Act assures gaps in the cancer care system are closed in order to provide better care and assistance to cancer patients.”

Research has confirmed that coordinated cancer care outlined in a written care plan—care that integrates active treatment and symptom management—improves patient outcomes, increases patient satisfaction, and reduces utilization of health care resources. The PACT Act would guarantee Medicare beneficiaries a new service that would encourage doctors to create a written care plan and to discuss and alter the plan based on shared decisions made with the patient's active involvement. It would also benefit patients who have finished treatment by providing a written summary of care the patient received and information about monitoring and follow-up support.

“The PACT Act has the potential to make a real difference in cancer care in our lifetime,” said Ellen Stovall, NCCS senior health policy advisor and a 42-year survivor of three separate cancer diagnoses. “Medical providers want to deliver the best care possible, but in order to do that, the patient's wishes must be clearly understood. By encouraging deliberate discussion and planning before, during and after cancer treatment, we can help make cancer patients—and the health system that cares for them—better.”

For more information on the PACT Act, please go to <http://www.canceradvocacy.org/pact-act/>.

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**About the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship:** *The National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS) advocates for quality cancer care for all people touched by cancer and provides tools that empower people to advocate for themselves. Founded by and for cancer survivors, NCCS is a leader in advocating for policy changes that promote quality cancer care. NCCS strongly believes in evidence-based advocacy that reflects the needs of cancer patients to effect policy change at the national level. Learn more about NCCS and its advocacy work at [www.canceradvocacy.org](http://www.canceradvocacy.org).*