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**Photos/Video available on our Facebook page: “American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network – Colorado”**

**Cancer Patients Join Others to Celebrate Public Health Milestones during *Chronic Disease and Cancer Awareness Day at the Capitol***

Denver, CO –March 9, 2017 – Patients of cancer and other chronic diseases assembled in Denver today for *Chronic Disease and Cancer Awareness Day at the Capitol.* The day-long gathering organized by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) and the Chronic Care Collaborative recognized the advancement of quality health care for all Coloradans, which has saved lives and reduced medical costs to the state.

Each patient advocate wore differently colored Mardi Gras beads denoting the specific chronic disease that has touched them. During legislative visits, the volunteers also presented daffodils to each lawmaker as part of the American Cancer Society’s annual Daffodil Days.

A luncheon was held in the Old Supreme Court Chambers on the 2nd floor of the Capitol to celebrate milestones reached in the 10 years since the Chronic Care Collaborative was established in Colorado. Currently, some of that progress for chronically-ill patients is under threat as Congress considers proposals to repeal or change parts of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The event featured cancer patients and survivors who have benefited from the ACA and now fear losing important patient protections and access to affordable coverage. Lack of quality health coverage can mean the difference between life or death to patients with serious health conditions or someone at risk for a serious disease.

“It isn’t just about having access to health coverage, it’s critical that chronically-ill patients such those fighting cancer get access to adequate insurance they can afford,” said ACS CAN Colorado Government Relations Director R.J. Ours.

Cancer is the leading cause of death in Colorado with more than 7,800 Coloradans expected to die from the devastating disease this year and an estimated 24,330 people newly diagnosed. Along with advocating for access to adequate and affordable health care, patient advocates met with lawmakers to discuss the following cancer-fighting policies:

**Private Marijuana Clubs** – Volunteer advocates asked legislators to vote no on Senate Bill 184, a measure seeking to establish indoor marijuana smoking private clubs, which is counter to the 2006 Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act.

**Prescription Drug Transparency –** Volunteers asked the General Assembly to support a bill aimed at preventing prescription drug step therapy (Senate Bill 203).

**Palliative Care -** ACS CAN and other Colorado Chronic Care Collaborative volunteers asked lawmakers to establish a palliative care interim committee to give patients access to relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness.

The patient advocates asked legislators to sign a “Palliative Care Promise” to sponsor or support a resolution to establish a legislative interim committee that brings together palliative care experts. The committee would ultimately recommend a statewide action plan to effectively deal with payment and reimbursement issues, adequate training and certification of palliative providers.

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit [www.acscan.org](http://www.acscan.org).

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