CANCER PATIENTS AT PONTCHARTRAIN CANCER CENTER ADVOCATE FOR LOCAL CANCER CARE

As Community Oncology Clinics are Threatened, Cancer Patients and Survivors Form a CPAN Chapter to Speak Out

Covington, LA – June 30, 2017 – Pontchartrain Cancer Center in Covington, launched a new local chapter of the Community Oncology Alliance Patient Advocacy Network (CPAN), which will advocate for cancer patients locally and nationally.

The chapter brings together cancer patients and survivors, caregivers and family members, oncology and other medical professionals, and community members to preserve local, quality, affordable cancer care for all. For cancer patients, having care that’s close to home is especially important – a task that has become tougher as more than 380 community oncology clinics have closed nationwide since 2008, due in part to Medicare payment policies. At the same time, many hospitals and health systems are consolidating, leaving fewer locally owned or managed options for cancer patients.

“At Pontchartrain Cancer Center, we are committed to giving our patients quality care right here in Covington,” said Kathy Oubre, MS, Chief Operating Officer of Pontchartrain Cancer Center.

CPAN is a nationally recognized patient advocacy group that gives patients, survivors, and others a vital voice in both sharing their experiences and advocating for their community cancer care. There are active CPAN chapters across the country, and advocates are regularly in Washington, D.C. talking to members of Congress and federal policymakers about the importance of community oncology, where the majority of Americans with cancer receive their care.

Rose Gerber, director of patient advocacy and education for the Community Oncology Alliance (COA), a non-profit organization dedicated solely to preserving and protecting access to community cancer care, cited the need for changes in how Medicare pays for cancer care for its beneficiaries. When community oncology clinics close, patients are often treated in hospitals, where treatments can cost 50 percent more for both patients and taxpayers.
“Pontchartrain Cancer Center helps Covington patients receive state-of-the-art, personalized care close to their homes,” Gerber said. “All too often, they are the ones that suffer the most when local, affordable cancer care is threatened by misguided government policies,” Gerber said. “Thanks to the leadership of Pontchartrain Cancer Center, cancer patients, family members, and survivors, now have access to a powerful, national advocacy network.”

The chapter launch also included presentations by David Oubre, MD.

**About the Community Oncology Alliance (COA)**
The Community Oncology Alliance (COA) is a non-profit organization dedicated solely to preserving and protecting access to community cancer care, where the majority of Americans with cancer are treated. COA leads community cancer clinics in navigating an increasingly challenging environment to provide efficiencies, patient advocacy, and proactive solutions to Congress and policy makers. To learn more about COA visit [www.CommunityOncology.org](http://www.CommunityOncology.org).

**About the COA Patient Advocacy Network (CPAN)**
The Community Oncology Alliance Patient Advocacy Network (CPAN) was created in recognition of the vital role patients should play in advocating for access to local, affordable cancer care for all. CPAN is a non-cancer type-specific, national network representing patients, cancer survivors, caregivers, family members, medical and oncology professionals, and other advocates. To learn more about CPAN visit [www.COAadvocacy.org](http://www.COAadvocacy.org).

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