



Foundation for Health Coverage Education Collaborates with the American Cancer Society to Help Cancer Patients Better Navigate Free & Low Cost Health Coverage Options

Service provides access for Americans who do not know where to turn for health coverage options

San Jose, Calif. April 16, 2009 - The Foundation for Health Coverage Education (FHCE) today announced an effort to expand its reach to help the uninsured find coverage by working with the American Cancer Society's National Cancer Information Center (NCIC) to refer uninsured callers to FHCE's U.S. Uninsured Help Line and www.CoverageForAll.org. The American Cancer Society's NCIC is a nationwide help line that offers the public up-to-date cancer information and local cancer resources. Through this service, the American Cancer Society can respond to the needs of the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, more than 45.7 million people in America are uninsured. Yet as many as one-third of these uninsured people may be eligible for public-sponsored programs but are not enrolled. The FHCE links uninsured Americans to hundreds of state and federal assistance programs through the *U.S. Uninsured Help Line* (800-234-1317) and *Coverage For All* website, www.coverageforall.org. FHCE currently provides access to 175 public healthcare program applications online, allowing Americans seeking government-sponsored health coverage to apply for the programs that best meet their needs.

“FHCE provides another valuable resource to uninsured callers who call the American Cancer Society's National Cancer Information Center searching for ways to pay for their cancer care,” said Kevin Babb, strategic director, American Cancer Society National Cancer Information Center. “Cancer Information Specialists at the NCIC provide callers with general cancer information and access to local cancer resources such as support groups, patient services and local social services. These resources are crucial to helping patients and their families cope with the physical,

psychological, and emotional challenges of a cancer diagnosis. Now they will also refer many uninsured callers to FHCE’s live help line of trained counselors.”

Lack of adequate insurance coverage puts many healthy people at higher risk for being diagnosed with cancer at a later stage. Too many people—including many who are insured but not adequately covered—are foregoing early detection testing. According to a 2006 USA Today/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health report, among those who were insured during their illness, 22 percent reported having used up all or most of their savings to pay for treatments; seven percent were unable to pay for basic necessities like food, heat, or housing; and three percent declared bankruptcy. Among uninsured cancer patients, 46 percent reported having used up all or most of their savings to pay for treatments; 41 percent have been unable to pay for basic necessities, including food, heat, or housing; and six percent declared bankruptcy.

"Working with the American Cancer Society allows the *Coverage for All* campaign to provide both public and private coverage options to residents of all 50 states," said Ankeny Minoux, president of FHCE. "Through our collaborative efforts, we can effectively help to reduce the ranks of America’s uninsured and provide some measure of information, comfort and support to those going through a difficult health issue.”

Trained cancer information specialists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the American Cancer Society’s National Cancer Information Center at 1-800-227-2345 or on the Web site at cancer.org.

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About FHCE

The Foundation for Health Coverage Education (FHCE) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization with a mission to help simplify public and private health insurance eligibility information. In addition to its U.S. Uninsured Help Line (800) 234-1317 and website www.coverageforall.org, FHCE offers free consumer guides such as the Health Care Options Matrix™ available for all 50 states.

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