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American Cancer Society Encourages Mammography Screening

Improved early detection makes breast cancer survivors largest survivor group in nation

Des Moines, IA – October 2, 2007 – Improved treatments, increased awareness about the importance of early detection, and higher mammography screening utilization have resulted in a steady decline in breast cancer death rates since 1991. Because mammography screening is the most effective method of early breast cancer detection, women age 40 and older should receive annual mammograms, for life.

This year, there will be an estimated 178,480 new cases of breast cancer, and 40,460 breast cancer deaths nationwide . In Iowa more than 2,000 women are expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer, and more than 410 women are expected to die from the disease.

Significant progress has been made in mammography technology to assist physicians in diagnosing the disease at an early stage, usually before physical symptoms develop. When breast cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, before it has spread to lymph nodes or other locations in the body, the five-year survival rate is 98 percent.

Besides being female, age is the most important risk factor for breast cancer risk. Of the women diagnosed with breast cancer, 95 percent are age 40 and older. Race is another important risk factor. Caucasian women are slightly more likely to develop breast cancer, but African-American women are more likely to die of the disease because their cancers are often diagnosed later and their tumors tend to be more aggressive. Other risk factors include obesity, consuming more than two alcohol drinks daily, and a family or personal history of breast cancer.

As the nation's largest non-government supporter of breast cancer research over time nationwide, the American Cancer Society has funded more than \$322.7 million in breast cancer research grants since 1972.

For more information about breast cancer diagnosis, screening or treatment options, call the American Cancer Society at 1.800.ACS.2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives and diminishing suffering through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1.800.ACS.2345 or visit www.cancer.org.