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Sponsor Statement

HCR: Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

Over 43,000 people were diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the United States (US) in 2010. Almost 37,000 will die from the disease. Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the US and ranks as one of the deadliest cancers with no real improvement in survival rates in the last 40 years. Three-fourths of pancreatic cancer patients die within one year of diagnosis; this is because by the time symptoms of pancreatic cancer first appear, it is usually too late for an optimistic prognosis. All of this while only receiving 2% of the National Cancer Institute's federal research funding.

The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PANCAN) is the first and only national patient advocacy organization to serve the pancreatic cancer community in Alaska. PANCAN focuses their efforts on public policy, research funding, patient services, and public awareness and education related to developing effective treatments and finding a cure for pancreatic cancer. The Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics reported 158 Alaskan deaths from pancreatic cancer during 2006-2008.

Increasing awareness will lead to expanded research into locating the disease's causes, enhancing early detection, and developing effective treatments. Raised awareness will also lead to more knowledge about pancreatic cancer among Alaskans and directly enhance the good health and well-being of our state's residents.