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OVARIAN CANCER NATIONAL ALLIANCE INTRODUCES OVARIAN CANCER PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Washington, D.C. – *October 5, 2009.* In a bold effort to provide women and their doctors with better information about how and when to take the necessary steps to obtain an early diagnosis for ovarian cancer, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance has taken the lead in posting guidance for diagnoses on its web site (ovariancancer.org/diary). The Interim Practice Guidance, endorsed by prominent specialists in the field of gynecologic cancer, marks the first time ovarian cancer diagnostic protocols have been made available to the public. In addition to the guidance, a Symptom Diary that helps women measure the persistency and severity of their symptoms (initially developed in the United Kingdom by Ovarian Cancer Action), has been reproduced in conjunction with the Gynecologic Cancer Foundation, with permission for use in the United States.

Annually, more than 15,000 women die from ovarian cancer, and survival rates have hovered at 40% for years, primarily due to the lack of a reliable early detection test, and that many of the symptoms often mimic other, less life-threatening problems.

Karen Orloff Kaplan, CEO of the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance believes this important information should be shared publicly to help women with ovarian cancer get diagnosed sooner. “Giving women the information they need to more effectively listen to their bodies and recognize the symptoms of ovarian cancer can help reduce the number of deaths from this hideous disease. By using the Symptom Diary and the Interim Practice Guidance, we believe that more lives can be saved.”

Barbara Goff, M.D. of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance also endorsed the preparation and release of the guidance. “I think this guidance is important because the symptoms of ovarian cancer are very common and we all have them from time to time. This guidance summary provides information to practitioners and women about when symptoms may be concerning for ovarian cancer and what are the possible diagnostic tests that can be done if ovarian cancer is of concern.”

For a downloadable copy of the Practice Guidance and Symptom Diary, visit ovariancancer.org/diary.

If the following symptoms are frequent and persist for more than a month, are unusual for a woman and are otherwise unexplained, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance advises that she have an evaluation for ovarian cancer. These symptoms include:

- Bloating
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency)

There is no definitive test for ovarian cancer so experts suggest a combination of pelvic/rectal exam, a CA-125 blood test and a transvaginal ultrasound.

Established in 1997, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance is the foremost advocate for women with ovarian cancer in the United States. Until there is a cure for the disease, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance, a 501(c) (3) organization, leads the national initiative to reduce the number of deaths from ovarian cancer by uniting individuals and organizations at the local, state, and national levels to advance ovarian cancer research in the quest for early detection tests, improve health care practices, and develop of life-saving treatment protocols.

For more information about Ovarian Cancer Action in the United Kingdom, visit <http://www.ovarian.org.uk>.

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For more information on this topic or to schedule an interview, please contact Georgi Morales via email at gmorales@ovariancancer.org or call (202)331-1332.