

***Canadian Thyroid Cancer Patients Have the Longest Wait
For Surgery Amongst All Countries in Global Survey***

- Seven national patient advocacy groups conducted thyroid cancer research
- Survey identified differences in patient experiences and highlighted areas for surgical, treatment and support improvements
- Thyroid cancer is the fastest increasing cancer worldwide

PARIS, September 11, 2010 – New patient research was shared today by the Thyroid Cancer Alliance (TCA) in a poster presentation at the **International Thyroid Congress**, shedding new light on patient treatment experience, the quality of life impacted by thyroid cancer and the lack of support provided at time of diagnosis. Significantly, more than 93% of respondents indicated they were not offered psychological support, 84% were not made aware of patient support organizations and 63% were not offered clear written information about their disease or its treatments.

What is most striking in the data is that Canadian patients have the longest waiting period to see a specialist for thyroid cancer diagnoses. Almost half of Canadians waited more than a month; 22% waited between 8 to 40+ weeks to see a thyroid doctor. Additionally once a diagnosis is made, surgery can be delayed for as long as 278 days in cities like London, Ontario¹. In total, patients often wait a full year for surgery and treatment for thyroid cancer. The situation will likely worsen as thyroid cancer is the fastest growing form of any cancer (more than 10% increase²).

The survey also found that a high proportion of patients had post-surgical complications such as low blood calcium (38%) and voice problems (36%) being most common. Administration of radioactive iodine treatment (RAI) was widely used (84%) and side effects were common (80%), yet initiation of treatment could be delayed with 28% receiving their first treatment more than two months after surgery. The full survey results are available at www.thyroid-cancer-alliance.org and data specific to the Canadian highlights can be viewed at www.thyroidcancercanada.org.

Thyroid cancer has been identified as the fastest increasing cancer in the world with an estimated 212,033 people globally diagnosed with thyroid cancer each year.³ The TCA is made up of seven thyroid cancer patient advocacy groups from around the globe who have come together to improve the patient experience of all its members. The survey was the first project the TCA has undertaken together. The member organizations work to raise awareness of the condition and the need for early detection as well as provide patients with support and counseling.

The TCA conducted the survey online and made available to thyroid cancer patients around the globe through the websites of the seven organizations making up the Alliance in March 2010. A total of 2,398 people completed the forms and reported living in 40 countries. The survey was funded by Genzyme.

For more information:

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¹ Ontario Wait Times <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/waittimes/surgery/default.aspx>

² Canadian Cancer Society, 2010 statistics www.cancer.ca

³ GlobboCan. Most frequent cancers: both sexes.

<http://globocan.iarc.fr/factsheets/populations/factsheet.asp?uno=900#BOTH>. Updated May 2010.