

News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blue Lights to Help Chicagoans See Prostate Cancer

CHICAGO, IL – September 8, 2010 – Chicago city leaders, along with management of major landmark buildings, are doing their part to raise prostate cancer awareness in Chicago. September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Since the color blue is to prostate cancer as pink is to breast cancer, a number of building exteriors in downtown Chicago will be awash with blue lighting at night throughout this month.

There are 2.5 million men battling prostate cancer as survivors today and approximately 32,050 prostate cancer patients will die from the disease in 2010. According to estimates based on new National Cancer Institute data, more than 217,000 new prostate cancer cases will be diagnosed in 2010 – exceeding the number of new breast cancer cases predicted. The new NCI numbers represent a 17 percent jump in deaths and a more than 13 percent rise in diagnosed cases this year as compared to 2009, which marks the greatest percentage increase since the mid-1990s.

“Prostate cancer awareness lags far behind that of breast cancer,” noted Thomas Kirk, CEO and President of Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education & Support Network, which is headquartered in Downers Grove. “And many of the people who are aware of it don’t recognize the seriousness of the disease. Prostate cancer can be a silent killer since there are no symptoms in its early stages. That’s why it’s so important for men to get tested for prostate cancer annually. Hopefully these blue lights throughout this city and across the nation will serve as a visible reminder.”

Joining the ranks of other landmark buildings around the country, Willis Tower in downtown Chicago will be lit blue from September 6 – 9. The Empire State Building in New York City will also be bathed in blue this month. In addition, members of America’s Leading Prostate Cancer Organizations are asking President Obama to place a blue ribbon on the White House and light the White House blue this month to step-up prostate cancer awareness.

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Other Chicagoland activities recognizing Prostate Cancer Awareness Month build awareness and raise funds for Us TOO International, a 501-c-3 non-profit organization which provides prostate cancer survivors and their families with education and support services and materials free of charge. The 6th Annual SEA Blue Chicago Prostate Cancer 5K Run and 3K Walk will take place on Sunday, September 19, 2010 in Lincoln Park (<http://www.SEABlueProstateWalk.org>). Immediately following on Monday, September 20 is Rock Out 4 Cancer at the Hard Rock Café at 93 W. Ontario featuring emcees Ginger Zee of NBC5-TV and Dina Bair of WGN9-TV, Chicago sports celebrities, and two live bands benefiting four cancer charities (<http://www.rockout4cancer.com>). Also, "Conquer Prostate Cancer" braided leather designer wristbands are being sold around town at all of the events and online (<http://www.ustoo.org/LeatherWristbands.asp>) with all net proceeds benefiting Us TOO.

Prostate cancer is diagnosed through a digital rectal exam (DRE) along with a prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test. Both tests can be conducted as part of an annual physical exam. The risk of prostate cancer increases exponentially after age 50 and by the age of 60, as many as 34 percent of men show early evidence of prostate cancer. If detected while still in the prostate gland, prostate cancer has nearly a 100 percent five-year survival rate. Since early stage prostate cancer usually has no symptoms, early detection is critical. Us TOO recommends that men have annual prostate examinations by age 35 if African American or have a family history of prostate cancer (either are considered high-risk), but no later than age 40 for all other men.

Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education & Support Network (www.ustoo.org) is a source of peer-to-peer support and free materials for men and their families to make informed choices on prostate cancer detection and treatment options. Founded 20 years ago by prostate cancer survivors and their families "who recognized that cancer affects us, too," the 501(c)(3) non-profit is headquartered in Illinois and works with volunteers in 325 affiliated support group chapters worldwide.

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