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Blue Ribbon Panel Report Garners AACI Endorsement

The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) announces its strong support for recommendations issued today by the Cancer Moonshot Blue Ribbon Panel, and thanks the panel's members who lead AACI cancer centers for their service to the cancer research community.

At the request of the White House, under the leadership of Vice President Joe Biden, the Blue Ribbon Panel has produced a report outlining areas of urgent action to speed progress in the field of cancer research.

The panel, comprised of scientific experts, cancer leaders, and patient advocates, includes four AACI cancer center directors: Mary Beckerle, PhD, CEO and Director, Huntsman Cancer Institute, Salt Lake City; Chi Van Dang, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Director, Abramson Cancer Center, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Augusto Ochoa, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Director, Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center Louisiana State University, New Orleans; and, Jennifer Pietenpol, PhD, Professor of Oncology, Professor of Biochemistry, and Director, Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, Nashville, Tennessee. In addition, Laurie Glimcher, MD, Professor of Medicine and Dean, Weill Cornell Medical College, is incoming President and CEO, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston.

The report's recommendations include a focus on areas where we are poised to accelerate scientific progress as well as patient involvement, developing a "national cancer ecosystem" and working together to share data and results more effectively.

"As a primary source for the generation, collection and use of molecular, clinical and outcomes data, AACI and its member cancer centers fully support the Blue Ribbon Panel's call to revolutionize the generation and sharing of medical and research data," said AACI President George J. Weiner, MD.

Dr. Weiner stressed that steady, predictable funding for the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute is vital as cancer centers work to share data and improve information systems and communication across the cancer continuum. Streamlining regulatory oversight of these efforts, while also protecting patient privacy, is central to optimizing progress.

A key element of AACI's mission is helping cancer centers keep pace with the changing landscape in science, technology and health care. The Blue Ribbon Panel report notes that "the vast majority of Americans do not have easy access to precision cancer testing since oncology clinical trials are offered mainly at large academic cancer centers and not at community cancer centers where most cancer patients receive their treatments." In July, AACI presented a white paper to the Office of the Vice President detailing AACI President-Elect Stanton L. Gerson, MD's presidential initiative to include the academic cancer centers as the focal point for broader community access. The white paper focused on the deep impact AACI centers have on cancer care and novel therapy through clinical trials.

"AACI looks forward to collaborating with the members of the Blue Ribbon Panel in order to implement their important recommendations and to meet the Vice President's goal of ending cancer as we know it," said AACI Executive Director Barbara Duffy Stewart, MPH.

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The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) comprises 95 premier academic and freestanding cancer research centers in the U.S. and Canada. AACI is dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer by enhancing the impact of the leading academic cancer centers.