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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Association of American Cancer Institutes Appoints New Executive Director

Jennifer Pegher brings extensive experience in nonprofit leadership, advocacy, and public policy to her new role in the organization.

Pittsburgh, PA (October 17, 2018) — **Jennifer W. Pegher, MA**, is the new executive director of the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI). She is AACI's second executive director in its 19-year history and succeeds its founding executive director, Barbara Duffy Stewart, who retired earlier this month.

Ms. Pegher has been with AACI for six years, most recently serving as the association's deputy director. Previously, she managed AACI's government relations efforts. She holds a master's degree in government from the Johns Hopkins University and has deep experience in Washington, DC, having worked for former Congressman Philip S. English of Pennsylvania and the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions (formerly the National Association of Federal Credit Unions). Before joining AACI, Ms. Pegher served as executive director of the Western Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Hemophilia Foundation.

"The Executive Committee of the AACI Board of Directors and I are delighted that we were able to identify someone with the talent, experience, and leadership capabilities of Jen Pegher to assume the role of executive director upon Barbara Duffy Stewart's retirement," said AACI President Roy A. Jensen, MD. "Barbara is an icon in the cancer centers community, but I sincerely believe that we have found the one person capable of carrying on Barbara's legacy in the vital role of executive director of AACI. The fact that we have watched Jen grow into this position—and while doing so demonstrate a profound commitment to our organization, the nation's leading cancer centers, and the patients that those centers serve—is very reassuring. We are all excited to welcome Jen into her new role for our organization."



Dr. Jensen began his two-year term on October 2. For his presidential initiative, he will spearhead the development of a comprehensive, cancer-specific clearinghouse of model legislation for AACI cancer centers to share with their state legislators.

“Good public policy that limits carcinogen exposures or promotes the adoption of healthy behaviors can save hundreds—if not thousands—of lives and represents a critical tool in our efforts to lower cancer mortality,” said Dr. Jensen, director of The University of Kansas Cancer Center.

With its focus on sound public policy, the initiative dovetails with Ms. Pegher’s expertise in government relations and AACI’s longstanding dedication to cancer advocacy. In 2005, Ms. Stewart established annual visits to Capitol Hill to convene cancer center directors, researchers, physician-scientists, cancer survivors, and patient advocates for meetings with legislators and their staff to build strong support for federal investment in cancer research.

“I’m honored to follow in the footsteps of my mentor, Barbara Duffy Stewart, to continue engaging our cancer centers, legislators, and cancer advocates through our programs and initiatives,” said Ms. Pegher.

Another new initiative will bring together AACI members who are experts in the emerging field of CAR T-cell therapy to advance the goal of offering more patients access to this groundbreaking therapeutic approach.

“AACI enables our members to come together to share best practices that allow our cancer centers to better serve their patients,” Ms. Pegher said. “The possibilities for AACI and our cancer centers are limitless.”

AACI is the only professional association that focuses exclusively on academic cancer centers. Its hallmark programs highlight clinical research, cancer center networks, physician clinical leadership, and the value of academic cancer centers.

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The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) comprises 98 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.