



HIGHLIGHT: ThyCa: Thyroid Cancer Survivors Association

ThyCa Holds Successful 13th Annual Thyroid Cancer Survivors Conference

The 2010 Conference, held in Dallas, Texas topped all previous conferences in its reach. Participants came from 40 states, DC, Canada, Hong Kong, and United Kingdom. They included people at all phases of testing, treatment and follow-up for all types of thyroid cancer, at all stages of disease, from low-risk patients to those with advanced metastatic disease seeking or already in clinical trials. Attendees ranged from children to seniors, many with family members also attending.

The 3 days featured more than 100 informative sessions on research and treatment advances, and speakers included 37 distinguished medical professionals in many specialties. Topics included care management for patients at different risk levels, including use of ATA's Guidelines, as well as current clinical trials and the development of new targeted therapies for patients whose thyroid cancer has not responded to other treatments. Additional sessions focused on practical and family issues experienced by people coping with thyroid cancer, plus peer-support roundtables led by long-term survivors and caregivers.

The 37 medical professionals included specialists in endocrinology, medical oncology, nuclear medicine, oral medicine, pathology, and surgery, from numerous centers around the United States. Presenters also included genetic counselors, mental health professionals, nurse practitioners, and attorneys specializing in employment, disability and estate and financial planning. Nurses who attended were able to receive continuing education credits, offered for the 4th year in a row at the conference.

The conference also featured the premiere showing of a new educational 62-minute documentary titled "Thyroid Cancer's Magic Bullet: The Prep, The Pill, The Post," developed by Nick Isenberg, filmmaker and thyroid cancer survivor and including interviews with specialists at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. The film helps patients and caregivers see, hear, and understand what to expect before and after receiving RAI, giving the perspectives of patients, physicians and other professionals as it tells the story about differentiated thyroid cancer care.

Resource tables displayed free materials, including the new expanded 7th edition of the downloadable Low-Iodine Cookbook, the free Pediatric Backpacks sent to families with children and teens with thyroid cancer, thyroid cancer awareness and outreach materials, the ATA Guidelines and numerous additional resources.

One attendee wrote, "The sessions helped make us informed patients by having so many knowledgeable, patient, and friendly physicians plus other medical specialists. All gave us greater insights into all aspects of thyroid cancer and all topics related to it. You can learn something new every year at the International Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Conference."

On the Saturday evening of the conference, the 9th Annual Dinner/Auction Fundraiser raised more than \$38,000 for thyroid cancer research. Trish Allen of Texas, an anaplastic thyroid cancer survivor, and Phil Doetch of California, who created the Million Steps for Bob campaign in memory of his friend Bob Dubcich, gave inspiring talks and appeals for more thyroid cancer research. Several attendees, including one medical professional, responded to the spontaneous Somersaults Challenge and in just a few minutes raised more than \$2,000 for research. This evening of fundraising helps ThyCa continue to fund thyroid cancer research—now 8 straight years providing 14 different grants totaling more than \$650,000. ThyCa plans to award more new research grants in 2011, with recipients to be selected by ATA's independent expert panel.

ThyCa thanks all the medical professionals, including numerous ATA members, who generously contributed their time and expertise to this important event for patient and caregivers. We invite all ATA members and friends to tell your patients, colleagues, and staff about ThyCa's free year-round resources and events. During 2011, there will be hundreds of free local support group meetings, free regional one-day workshops and seminars, and the 14th International Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Conference on October 14-16, 2011 at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport Hotel, 5711 West Century Boulevard, Los Angeles, California. Additionally, ThyCa also hosts Thyroid Cancer Awareness Month worldwide in September as well as ongoing awareness campaigns throughout the year."

For free materials for patients and news about events and the Rally for Research, e-mail to thyca@thyca.org, fax 630-604-6078, call 877-588-7904, or visit www.thyca.org. To receive ThyCa's free online newsletter, sign up with ThyCa's free Guestbook at www.thyca.org/guestbook.htm.

— Gary Bloom, ThyCa Executive Director