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****MEDIA ADVISORY****

Patient Groups, Lawmakers Mark Mother's Day, Urge Protection of Cancer Screening Program

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – May 4, 2015 – Patient groups and lawmakers are marking Mother's Day by reminding the General Assembly of the real lives affected by potential cuts to the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP). The cuts are part of Gov. Bruce Rauner's proposed state budget and include a more than 70 percent reduction in funding for cancer screenings and the elimination of Medicaid eligibility for women diagnosed with cancer through the program.

"These aren't just numbers on a page. These are real mothers, daughters, sisters and wives who will lose access to lifesaving cancer screenings and treatment if Governor Rauner's proposed cuts are approved," said Heather Eagleton, Illinois government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). "The best gift we can give to Illinois women this Mother's Day is to protect funding and Medicaid eligibility for this program, so that they can continue to be mothers to families across the state."

Under the Affordable Care Act, more women will have access to preventive cancer screenings and treatments. However, gaps will still remain for individuals who will continue to be uninsured or under-insured due to affordability, literacy and language-related barriers. It's estimated that more than 273,000 Illinois women will still lack access to breast and cervical cancer screenings.

Several lawmakers will be joining cancer survivors and representatives from numerous patient groups on Thursday, May 7 to detail the potential effects of the governor's cuts.

WHO: **Heather Eagleton**, Illinois government relations director for ACS CAN
Doris Garrett, service area specialist, Susan G. Komen Memorial Affiliate
Leticia Kees, director of community programs and partnerships, Susan G. Komen Chicago Affiliate
Tarneka Manning, community outreach manager, Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force
Ralph Schubert, director of public policy, Illinois Public Health Association
Janna Sullivan, a breast cancer survivor and former IBCCP patient
State legislators, including:

Sen. Pam Althoff (R-32nd District)
Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-18th District)
Rep. Greg Harris (D-13th District)
Sen. Mattie Hunter (D-3rd District)
Rep. Rita Mayfield (D-60th District)
Rep. Mike Smiddy (D-71st District)
Sen. Heather Steans (D-7th District)

WHAT: Press conference on proposed cuts to state cancer screening program

WHERE: Illinois State Capitol, basement, blue room
301 S. Second St., Springfield

WHEN: Thursday, May 7 at 10 a.m.

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