

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **AMERICA'S PROSTATE CANCER ORGANIZATIONS GREATLY CONCERNED AT THREAT TO MEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE IN ILLINOIS**

Washington, DC, June 16, 2010: Widespread budget crises now being addressed by legislatures across the country could have a potentially disastrous effect on State-based health initiatives across America.

In Illinois, as a critical example, the legislature is finalizing its budget for FY 2011, and a key program threatened is the state's long-running Prostate and Testicular Cancer Program. This program could be cut in its entirety as early as July this year.

Since 2000, the Illinois Prostate and Testicular Cancer Program has provided more than 25,000 prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests and 4,300 digital rectal exams (DREs) to men in that state. Of those 25,000 men tested for their risk for prostate cancer, nearly 1,800 individuals or one man in every 14 had an abnormal PSA blood test or an abnormal DRE – suggesting the possibility that they were at increased risk for prostate cancer.

Like many states, Illinois finds itself in a dire and unenviable financial position, with few good options. But this program improves the lives of men by initiating, facilitating, and coordinating programs throughout the state to promote awareness and early detection of two male-specific diseases: prostate and testicular cancer -- and its current annual cost is little more than \$250,000 per year. It seems near to unbelievable that the only significant men's health initiative in Illinois could be terminated in this manner when other programs for women and children – although cut back – at least remain in place.

“Prostate cancer is diagnosed in Illinois each year at about the same rate as breast cancer,” says Thomas Kirk, president of Us TOO International, the world's largest prostate cancer education and support network, which is headquartered in Downer's Grove, IL. “We implore Governor Quinn and the Illinois legislature to set an example by finding a way to retain this critical men's health program. Surely we can work together to maintain a social commitment that addresses the specific health needs of men, as well as those of our women and children.”

ZERO – The Project to End Prostate Cancer is coordinating a letter-writing campaign asking Gov. Quinn and Illinois state law-makers to retain funding for this program for 2011 and beyond.

About America's Prostate Cancer Organizations: Prostate cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer among American males. Nearly 218,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2010, and about 32,000 will die from this disease. This group of independent, not-for-profit organizations cooperates to foster the development of policies that support the early detection of clinically significant prostate cancer, the effective treatment of men with this disease, and the appropriate education of all men at risk for this disease.

The above statement has been issued on behalf of and endorsed by:

Malecare Prostate Cancer Support  
Men's Health Network  
National Alliance of State Prostate Cancer Coalitions  
Prostate Cancer Foundation  
Prostate Cancer International  
Prostate Conditions Education Council  
Prostate Health Education Network  
The Prostate Net  
Women Against Prostate Cancer  
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network  
ZERO – The Project to End Prostate Cancer