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EXECUTIVE ORDER AN ESSENTIAL STEP TO RESOLVE DRUG SHORTAGE CRISIS

Statement of Christopher W. Hansen, President,
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WASHINGTON -- October 31, 2011 -- "The presidential executive order issued today is an essential step to address the growing drug shortage crisis, which is denying people with cancer access to the lifesaving medications they need.

"The availability of cancer drugs can mean the difference between life and death for someone with cancer, and the drug shortage crisis is making it difficult or impossible for some cancer patients to get the medications they have been prescribed. Patients have been forced to wait for drugs that they need immediately, to travel to alternate pharmacies or treatment centers to fill their prescriptions, and to use different and potentially less effective medications to treat their condition.

"Today's executive order takes similar steps as those called for in bipartisan legislation, the Preserving Access to Life-Saving Medications Act (S. 296 and H.R. 2245), which would give the Food and Drug Administration the ability to receive advance notification from drug manufacturers about factors that could lead to drug shortages that leave potentially lifesaving medicines out of reach for patients.

"Advance notification to the FDA from industry about the potential suspension of drug production, an interruption in manufacturing, or other production adjustments that might lead to a shortage would put the FDA in a better position to track and manage potential drug shortages. Notification would also allow government, industry, providers and the public to more systematically analyze and understand the causes of specific drug shortages as they occur, and to develop real-time solutions that are also needed to address the acute problems that cancer patients live with daily.

"On behalf of people with cancer and their families nationwide, ACS CAN commends the president for taking action allowing government, industry, health providers, and patient advocates to work together to better understand the causes of drug shortages and seek the most effective solutions to this crisis."

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit www.acscan.org.

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