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For Immediate Release

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Five-year survival rates of Seattle Cancer Care Alliance patients are highest among most cancer programs nationwide

SEATTLE – Five-year survival rates among patients treated by [Seattle Cancer Care Alliance](#) for eight types of cancer are higher than for patients treated at other academic medical centers, as well as large and small community cancer centers nationwide, according to data compiled by the [National Cancer Data Base](#) (NCDB).

Notably, the five-year survival rates of SCCA patients for these cancers all were higher than those of cancer patients treated at the 235 academic research hospitals from which the NCDB collects data. Survival rates may be higher among patients treated in these institutions because of their concentration of specialists and specialty cancer programs. The NCDB categorizes SCCA as an academic/research hospital. SCCA is the cancer-treatment arm of [Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center](#), [UW Medicine](#) and [Seattle Children's](#).

“We are delighted that our survival rates were so good, especially because these patients were treated 10 or more years ago, and treatment was based on what was considered the state of the art in cancer care at the time,” said David Byrd, M.D., director of Surgical Oncology at SCCA and cancer liaison physician to the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons, which jointly operates the NCDB with the American Cancer Society. “When compared to other teaching hospitals the NCDB tracks, we did even better than we had hoped.”

Byrd said the data also reinforces his belief that where cancer patients are treated first matters.

“We really think that the best time to cure a cancer, or have the best survival statistics, depends on how the patient is treated initially, from the time of diagnosis,” said Byrd, who is

also professor and chief of surgical oncology at the University of Washington School of Medicine

Byrd said he is confident that subsequent survival-rate reports will continue to show SCCA at the forefront because of its ongoing commitment to providing patients with research-based treatments and clinical trials of the latest drugs and other therapies.

The survival-rate data was collected and measured for patients treated at SCCA and the University of Washington Medical Center between 1998 and 2002 for different stages of breast, colon, lung and prostate cancer, as well as leukemia, lymphoma, melanoma and myeloma. Patients were followed for five years and survival rates were compiled as of 2007, the latest year the data was available. The five-year survival rate represents the percentage of patients alive five years after diagnosis and reflects death from any cause. It is uncommon for cancer to recur in patients after five years from initial diagnosis and is a commonly used survival benchmark.

The data does not compare SCCA to other cancer programs in the Puget Sound region or the Pacific Northwest.

The NCDB tracks the survival rates of 70 percent of all newly diagnosed cancer patients in the United States from more than 1,500 cancer programs accredited by the Commission on Cancer and publishes this data in its NCDB Survival Reports.

The NCDB collects and reports cancer survival rates for three categories of cancer programs: academic/research hospitals (such as SCCA), comprehensive community cancer centers and community cancer centers.

- Academic/research hospitals are associated with university medical schools. They provide a full range of services for diagnosis and treatment of cancer, and they employ board-certified medical staff. Academic/research hospitals make up almost one-quarter of the hospitals that participate in the Commission on Cancer accreditation program.

- Comprehensive community cancer centers diagnose and treat 650 or more cancer cases annually and have a full range of services for diagnosis and treatment. These facilities comprise almost two-fifths of the hospitals that participate in the Commission on Cancer accreditation program.

- Community cancer centers diagnose and treat up to 649 cancer cases annually and provide a full range of diagnostic and treatment services. These smaller programs make up more than a third of the hospitals that participate in the Commission on Cancer accreditation program.

A comprehensive report of SCCA's survival rates and a video news release can be found at <http://www.seattlecca.org/survivalrates>. The report includes answers to frequently asked questions and explains how the data was collected.

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About Seattle Cancer Care Alliance –Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) is a cancer treatment center that unites doctors from Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, UW Medicine and Seattle Children's. Our goal, every day, is to turn cancer patients into cancer survivors. Our purpose is to lead the world in the prevention and treatment of cancer. SCCA has three clinical care sites: an outpatient clinic on the Hutchinson Center campus, a pediatric inpatient unit at Seattle Children's, and an adult inpatient unit at UW Medical Center. For more information about SCCA, visit www.seattlecca.org.

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