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October 4, 2018

The Honorable Jerry Brown J.D., Governor, State of California
The Honorable Adam Padilla, California Secretary of State
The Honorable Catherine Baker J.D., Member, California General Assembly

Dear Governor Brown, Secretary Padilla and Assemblywoman Baker:

As an organization committed to liver health and awareness, we applaud the California State Assembly's announcement that the first week of December 2018 will mark the first annual "Cancer Screen Week." This is a crucial step to help raise awareness about the need for regular cancer screenings. However, in its press release announcing Cancer Screen Week, resolution ACR158 fails to make any mention of or provide statistics regarding liver cancer. The resolution recommends improving screenings and communication to patients about breast, lung, skin, cervical, and colorectal cancers, but no attention is given to liver cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates that the five year survival rates for liver cancer are as low as 18%. Liver cancer also exhibits health disparities across racial, ethnic, gender, and education groups. California specifically has a population highly vulnerable to liver cancer due to increased rates of hepatitis B (HBV) in the state. Individuals who have contracted HBV are at high risk for liver cancer, with an average of 30% of HBV patients developing liver cancer after infection. Promoting better communication of risk factors to these specific patient groups must be addressed if these disparities are to be overcome.

Liver cancer screenings and improved physician-patient communication are essential to combat this disease. Discovering liver cancer in its early stages can dramatically improve the chances of survival for patients. Early stage localized liver cancer has a 5 year survival rate of 31% but decreases to just 11% in latter stages. Too often patients seek medical attention only when experiencing signs or symptoms, which by then liver cancer would have progressed to late stages. Effective strategies must begin with preventative measures taken by individuals educated and aware of potential risk factors. We recommend that to better contribute to the success of "Cancer Screen Week" the State should include liver cancer in its implementation by providing information that raises awareness of the dangers of liver cancer. We recommend that the need for screening every 6-12 months be made clear for

Mailing:
4323 Westover Place, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Email: info@globalliver.org

Website: www.globalliver.org

Twitter: @globalliver

individuals at high risk of developing liver cancer, including those with liver diseases.

We would be delighted to help with appropriate messaging or to assist in any way we can. Thank you for taking the time to highlight this issue and promoting cancer awareness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna R. Cryer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Donna R. Cryer, JD
President & CEO
Global Liver Institute

¹Key Statistics About Liver Cancer. (n.d.). Retrieved October 2, 2018, from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/liver-cancer/about/what-is-key-statistics.html>

² Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Data. (n.d.). Retrieved October 2, 2018, from <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/ViralHepatitisData.aspx>

³Risk Factors for Liver Cancer. (n.d.). Retrieved October 2, 2018, from <http://www.hepb.org/research-and-programs/liver/risk-factors-for-liver-cancer/>

⁴Liver Cancer Survival Rates | Cancer of the Liver Survival Rates. (n.d.). Retrieved October 2, 2018, from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/liver-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/survival-rates.html>