

*New survey shows majority of Canadians participate in local fundraising events such as walks*

MONTREAL, Sept. 13, 2013 /CNW/ - This September, ten cities across Canada will take part in the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Multiple Myeloma March, a national fundraising event that supports multiple myeloma research, advancements in treatment and much-needed patient and caregiver programs in communities across Canada

Driven by patients and their friends and families, the Multiple Myeloma March is supported by more than 2,000 volunteers and participants who raise awareness of multiple myeloma, an incurable blood cancer of the plasma cells. Because plasma cells are found in the bone marrow and blood, myeloma is referred to as a hematologic or blood cancer.

Although multiple myeloma affects approximately 7,000 Canadians<sup>1</sup>, with an estimated 2,500 new diagnoses in 2013<sup>2</sup>, it remains a relatively unknown disease. Multiple myeloma is the second most prevalent blood cancer after non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

<sup>1</sup> and there is a strong need for education and awareness:

- Only 15 per cent of Canadians are able to properly identify multiple myeloma as a blood cancer<sup>3</sup>
- More than a third Canadians (39 per cent) believe that multiple myeloma is a skin cancer<sup>3</sup>
- 16 per cent identify it as a bone cancer<sup>3</sup>

**Local Patient Programs Offer Much Needed Care**

Norma Lindner and Anne Spencer know first-hand how local fundraising can help those in need. Last year, at the age of 56, Lindner was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and received extensive treatment to help battle the disease. During this journey she felt overwhelmed and alone. When searching for resources and support regarding the disease, she came across information on the Multiple Myeloma March. Participating in her first March in Mississauga last year, Lindner was able to find a community that provided her the strength and planted the seed to start her own support group. Spencer, coordinator of the Mississauga Multiple Myeloma March, found the support she needed through the Myeloma Canada community when she first learned that her father was diagnosed with the disease in 2009. In the words of Spencer's father, "the greatest thing is to know," especially when dealing with an incurable disease, and Spencer wants to ensure that people with multiple myeloma and their families have the information they need to help guide them through their journey. Although both women have different stories, their discovery of Myeloma Canada has allowed them to share their personal experiences with people who understood their situations first hand.

"I am so thankful for the support that I have received from Myeloma Canada," says Lindner. "Not only have I benefited from the programs they offer, but the friends I have made along the way have made my journey with multiple myeloma much easier to navigate. That's why it is so important to support fundraising initiatives like the Multiple Myeloma March, so that everyone who is affected by the disease receives the care, resources and support they need."

Through Myeloma Canada, those affected by multiple myeloma have access to programs such as regional InfoSessions and the National Conference that are open to patients, caregivers or anyone wanting information on multiple myeloma. It is through these educational events, along with local support groups that people can learn how to live with this disease. Additionally, Myeloma Canada's advocacy efforts help drive access to new treatments to ensure patients can have the right drug at the right time.

## Canadians Continue to Be Giving

According to a new Ipsos Reid survey that was conducted on behalf of Myeloma Canada, Canadians are certainly living up to their generous reputation. The majority of Canadians believe local fundraising initiatives make a positive impact on communities and most have donated money to a local not-for-profit (84 per cent) or volunteered time (67 per cent) to a local charity.

Over half of Canadians (52 per cent) have participated in a fundraising activity for a local charity and three in ten Canadians have one cause that they support through a variety of initiatives throughout the year. There is a strong belief overall that these activities are important for communities and Canadians as a whole, with 88 per cent agreeing that fundraising initiatives at the community level make a positive impact on those who reside in the community.

## Power of Community

The Multiple Myeloma March was started in Montreal by a patient, her best friend and a small group of volunteers in 2009. Their aim was to make myeloma matter by creating a sense of community. This year, that small but powerful group has grown to over 2,000 volunteers and participants who are working together nation-wide across 10 cities to raise a total of \$400,000

. Funds raised will contribute to further patient programs, support advocacy efforts and advance research to help improve the lives of patients living with multiple myeloma.

"Not only are monies raised by Myeloma Canada incredibly important to patients but also to the research community as well," says Dr. Donna Reece, Professor and Director of the Program for Multiple Myeloma, Department of Medical Oncology and Hematology at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. "Fundraising on the national level supports the advancement of research, ultimately improving the quality of life of all Canadians living with multiple myeloma."

"It's truly remarkable to see how everyone has come together to take part in this important event," says Francine Gendron, executive director at Myeloma Canada. "We are very thankful to all the volunteers who are the heart and soul of this national event as they continue to make a positive impact on those who have been personally touched by the disease."

The success of the Multiple Myeloma March can be attributed to the ongoing support from patients and their friends and families, and thousands of volunteers who spend countless hours tirelessly driving awareness of multiple myeloma. Myeloma Canada gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the National Platinum sponsor, Celgene.

# Myeloma Canada Harnesses the Power of Community with National Multiple Myeloma March

Written by Australian Business

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"Myeloma Canada does incredible work across the country, not only supporting research for the future, but by providing important information and education for people living with multiple myeloma," said Kevin Leshuk, Vice-President and General Manager of Celgene Inc. "Celgene is honoured to be this year's National Platinum sponsor for the Multiple Myeloma March and we wish Myeloma Canada much success as they continue their efforts in support of research, awareness and advocacy continuing to change the landscape for families impacted by this disease."

Myeloma Canada also thanks its other Multiple Myeloma March sponsors, Janssen and Novartis.

Ten cities located across six provinces will be marching to make myeloma matter. These cities include: Halifax, Melville, Mississauga, Montreal, Quebec City, Saskatoon, Sault Ste. Marie, St. John's, Windsor, Essex County and Winnipeg.

To register, donate or take part in the Multiple Myeloma March, visit [www.myeloma.ca](http://www.myeloma.ca) or call 1-888-798-5771.

## About the Myeloma Canada Survey

These are some of the findings from an Ipsos Reid survey conducted between August 14 and 19, 2013, on behalf of Myeloma Canada. A sample of 1,002 Canadians were interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points had all Canadians been surveyed. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

## About Multiple Myeloma

Multiple myeloma, a blood cancer of the plasma cells, remains an incurable disease. Plasma cells produce antibodies and are found in the bone marrow, the hollow area within the bones. Because plasma cells are found in the blood, myeloma is referred to as a hematologic or blood cancer. The word "multiple" is often used because the malignant cells usually affect multiple areas of the bone marrow. Multiple myeloma is the second most prevalent blood cancer after non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Over the past decade, research and new treatments have helped myeloma patients live longer, more productive lives, raising hope that it will soon be considered a chronic condition, rather than the incurable disease it is today.

## About Myeloma Canada

Myeloma Canada is the only national organization exclusively devoted to the Canadian myeloma community. Patient-driven and patient-focused, Myeloma Canada makes myeloma matter by working with leading myeloma researchers and clinicians, as well as other cancer organizations and local support groups across Canada to help improve the lives of those Canadians living with the disease.

Myeloma Canada seeks to strengthen the voice of the Canadian myeloma community and to improve the quality of life of myeloma patients, their caregivers and families through education, awareness, advocacy and research. Myeloma Canada has been supporting Canadians with multiple myeloma since 2005.

<sup>1</sup> Myeloma Canada. What causes myeloma. <http://www.myelomacanada.ca/en/whatcausesmyeloma.htm>

Accessed

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<sup>2</sup>

Canadian Cancer Society. Multiple Myeloma Cancer Statistics.

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<http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/multiple-myeloma/statistics/?region=qc#ixzz2byLiVrvH>

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Myeloma Canada Ipsos Reid Survey.

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