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CONTACT:

Ginny Dunn
240-632-5309

Ginny.Dunn@HealthWellFoundation.org

HealthWell Foundation Opens New Cancer-Related Behavioral Health Fund

Groundbreaking Fund Provides Financial Assistance to Cover Services Prescribed by Behavioral Health Providers

GERMANTOWN, Md. — May 10, 2018 — The HealthWell Foundation®, an independent non-profit that provides a financial lifeline for inadequately insured Americans, has launched a new fund to provide copayment assistance for behavioral health treatments related to a cancer diagnosis. Through the Cancer-Related Behavioral Health Fund, HealthWell will provide up to \$2,000 in financial assistance for a 12-month grant to eligible patients who have annual household incomes up to 500 percent of the federal poverty level.

A cancer diagnosis brings a wealth of psychological challenges. Depression and anxiety are common diagnoses associated with these challenges, yet social or emotional support is offered in less than half of cancer patients' care. Behavioral health issues can also contribute to harmful health behaviors.

“Distress in the cancer setting is a relatively common but disruptive phenomenon, which adversely affects physical and emotional well-being, interferes with treatment, and increases suffering. The American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS) advocates for holistic patient care to address patient and caregiver concerns of all types yet also acknowledges that not all aspects of this care may be available at the cancer treatment setting or available without additional cost,” said Teresa Deshields, Ph.D., ABPP, President of APOS. “The resources offered by the HealthWell Foundation will be enormously helpful to facilitate patients getting the care they need without additional financial burden.”

The HealthWell Foundation recognizes the unmet needs of oncology patients and the importance mental health has on treatment, recovery and overall well-being. Through this unique fund, HealthWell will assist patients in covering their out-of-pocket treatment-related costs for prescription drugs, counseling services, psychotherapy, and transportation.

“We know that the risk of mental health concerns, like clinical depression, is often higher in individuals with serious medical illnesses, such as cancer. In fact, it is estimated that one in four people with cancer also suffer from clinical depression,” said Paul Gionfriddo, President and CEO, Mental Health America. “It is important to know the signs – some of which can be mistakenly attributed to the cancer itself. We applaud the HealthWell Foundation for recognizing this need and dedicating assistance for behavioral health treatments related to a cancer diagnosis.”

“If cancer patients have certain behavioral health conditions and they are not treated for them, it can negatively impact health outcomes by decreasing the chances they will seek and adhere to treatment and by affecting their immune systems and ability to fight off cancer,” said Suzanne Miller, Ph.D., Professor of Cancer Prevention and Control and Director of Patient Empowerment and Health Decision Making at Fox Chase Cancer Center. “This new fund will help remove the financial barrier patients may face when seeking evidence-based psychological treatment.” Dr. Miller is Chairman of the Board for the [New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute](#) and also serves on the boards of the [Society of Behavioral Medicine](#) and the [HealthWell Foundation](#).

To determine eligibility and apply for financial assistance, visit HealthWell’s [Cancer-Related Behavioral Health Fund](#) page. To learn how you can support this or other HealthWell programs, visit [HealthWellFoundation.org](#).

The HealthWell Foundation would like to recognize the following organizations for their guidance and support in helping us develop and promote our Cancer-Related Behavioral Health Fund: [American Psychosocial Oncology Society](#), [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#), [Association of Community Cancer Centers](#), [Cancer Support Community](#), [Mental Health America](#), and the [National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors](#).

About the HealthWell Foundation

A nationally recognized, independent non-profit organization founded in 2003, the HealthWell Foundation has served as a safety net for more than 320,000 underinsured patients in more than 60 disease areas by providing access to life-changing medical treatments they otherwise would not be able to afford. HealthWell provides financial assistance to adults and children facing medical hardship resulting from gaps in their insurance that cause out-of-pocket medical expenses to escalate rapidly. HealthWell assists with the treatment-related cost-sharing obligations of these patients. For more information, visit [www.HealthWellFoundation.org](#).

HealthWell recently launched a [behavioral health](#) series through its sponsored blog, Real World Health Care. Please visit [www.realworldhealthcare.org](#) to view the series and subscribe.

About American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS)

APOS is the only multidisciplinary organization in the United States dedicated to the psychosocial aspects of cancer treatment. APOS membership consists of 475+ multidisciplinary practitioners and scientists from psychiatry, psychology, social work, nursing, oncology, clergy, patient advocacy, and social and behavioral health scientists who collaborate to apply clinical, translational, behavioral and psycho-oncological research into psychosocial oncology practice. For more information, visit: [www.apos-society.org](#) or @APOSHQ.

About Mental Health America (MHA)

Mental Health America (MHA) – founded in 1909 – is the nation's leading community-based non-profit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all Americans. Our work is driven by our commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, integrated care, services, and supports for those who need it, with recovery as the goal. Much of our

current work is guided by the Before Stage 4 (*B4Stage4*) philosophy – that mental health conditions should be treated long before they reach the most critical points in the disease process. To learn more, visit: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net>.

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