

New poll from Northwestern Mutual says lack of funds, awareness are key barriers in curing pediatric cancer

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 25, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Even though thousands of families in the U.S. feel the impact each year of pediatric cancer, a new poll cites that nearly half (49 percent) of Americans are unaware that pediatric cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children. The poll, executed in September, which is National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, was commissioned by Northwestern Mutual as part of its new philanthropic program to generate greater awareness about pediatric cancer.

Not only is cancer the leading cause of death by disease among U.S. children 1 to 14 years of age, the causes of childhood cancers are largely unknown according to the [National Cancer Institute](#).

"The survey findings underscore the urgent need to raise awareness and support for pediatric cancer," said John Kordsmeier, president of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation. "Through our pediatric cancer program, there is a wealth of opportunities for our financial representatives and employees to increase awareness within their own communities and impact a cause that touches thousands of American families."

"Northwestern Mutual's philanthropic efforts will not only increase funding for pediatric cancer research but also bring awareness to the fact that emotional support of families leads to improved health outcomes for the child," said Jacqueline Hart-Ibrahim, Global CEO of Starlight Children's Foundation.

In July 2012, Northwestern Mutual launched a national philanthropic program to accelerate the search for a cure to pediatric cancer and to provide support to kids and families facing the daily struggles of this disease. To achieve these goals, the Northwestern Mutual Foundation partners with two national nonprofits, Starlight Children's Foundation and Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation.

As these organizations work collaboratively to support families touched by childhood cancer, most Americans perceive that lack of funds and lack of awareness are the top two issues in fighting the disease, according to the survey.

Most needed for dealing with pediatric cancer:

Funds to research a cure – 82 percent of survey respondents

Financial support for families of children receiving treatments – 50 percent of survey respondents

Greatest obstacles in curing pediatric cancer:

Lack of research funds – 60 percent of survey respondents

Lack of awareness – 42 percent of survey respondents

Americans also cited lack of public support for pediatric cancer nonprofits (30 percent) and lack of researchers (28 percent) as additional barriers in curing pediatric cancer.

"These findings are in line with the harsh reality of childhood cancer: it is a vastly and consistently underfunded disease," said Jay Scott, co-executive director of Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to funding pediatric cancer research and helping families. "Funding cutting edge research will accelerate a cure for childhood cancer and give hope to those families who are emotionally and financially impacted."

For more information, visit the [Northwestern Mutual Foundation](#).

Survey Methodology

This research was conducted online by ORC International on behalf of Northwestern Mutual from September 10-12, 2012. The online omnibus study is conducted twice a week among a demographically representative U.S. sample of 1,000 adults 18 years of age and older. Because the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated.

About the Northwestern Mutual Foundation

The mission of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation – the largest corporate foundation in the state of Wisconsin – is to build strong, vibrant communities that serve as a legacy to future generations. The Foundation's giving is designed to create an impact on the communities where the company's employees and financial representatives live and work. In fiscal year 2012, the Foundation will contribute \$16.7 million to nonprofit organizations across the country.

About Northwestern Mutual

The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company – Milwaukee, WI ([Northwestern Mutual](#)) – among the "World's Most Admired" life insurance companies in 2012 according to FORTUNE® magazine – has helped clients achieve financial security for more than 155 years. As a mutual company with \$1.2 trillion of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual has no shareholders. The company focuses solely and directly on its clients and seeks to deliver consistent and dependable value to them over time. Northwestern Mutual and its subsidiaries offer a holistic approach to financial security solutions including: [life insurance](#), [long-term care insurance](#), [disability insurance](#), [annuities](#), [investment products](#), and [advisory products and services](#). Subsidiaries include [Northwestern Mutual Investment Services, LLC](#), broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC; the [Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company](#), limited purpose federal savings bank; and [Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company](#); and [Russell Investments](#).

About Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) emerged from the front yard lemonade stand of cancer patient Alexandra "Alex" Scott (1996-2004). In 2000, 4-year-old Alex announced that she wanted to hold a lemonade stand to raise money to help find a cure for all children with cancer. Since Alex held that first stand, the Foundation bearing her name has evolved into a national fundraising movement, complete with thousands of supporters across the country carrying on her legacy of hope. To date, Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a registered 501(c)3 charity, has raised more than \$55 million toward fulfilling Alex's dream of finding a cure, funding over 250 pediatric cancer research projects nationally. For more information on Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, visit [AlexsLemonade.org](#).

About Starlight Children's Foundation

When a child is diagnosed with a serious illness, the day-to-day joys of childhood take a back seat to the rigors of treatment and hospitalization. Starlight Children's Foundation™ is a leading global health and education charity working to embrace, empower and enrich the lives of children from illness to wellness. Since 1983, Starlight has been improving the quality of life for children with serious medical conditions through programming that helps kids cope with the experiences of prolonged illness. Starlight's innovative programs have been proven to distract children from their pain and lessen the need for pain medication, help young people better understand and manage their illness, and connect families with others facing similar challenges so that no one feels alone. Each year Starlight enriches the lives of more than 4.5 million children globally by providing ongoing support to children, parents and siblings through a network of partner hospitals, staff and volunteers in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Israel. To learn more visit [www.starlight.org](#).

SOURCE Northwestern Mutual

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