



For Immediate Release

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Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network Partners with 23 Patient Advocacy Groups to Encourage the TSA to Treat Travelers with Medical Devices with Dignity and Respect

Bethesda, Maryland (December 8, 2010) – The [Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network](#) (BCAN), along with 23 other patient advocacy organizations, has made concrete suggestions to the [Transportation Security Administration](#) (TSA) for improving the training of TSA officers to ensure that Americans with disabilities can be adequately screened with the respect and dignity they deserve. This action results from the recent incident with Tom Sawyer, a bladder cancer survivor whose ostomy bag leaked urine on him after a TSA pat-down. “While we appreciate how quickly TSA Administrator John Pistole apologized to Mr. Sawyer, more needs to be done,” said Diane Zipursky Quale, President of BCAN. “Mr. Pistole asked for input on how TSA officers could do their job better. We have some specific recommendations for the TSA.”

A coalition of 24 patient advocacy organizations that represent people who live with ostomies (which collect bodily waste through a stoma, or opening on their abdomen), indwelling ports, catheters, PICC lines, feeding tubes, insulin pumps, and other medical devices that could show up as anomalies in full-body scans sent a letter to TSA chief John Pistole on December 7 outlining their recommendations.

The recommendations included asking the TSA to:

- develop educational materials, including using pictures and demonstration devices, to explain to TSA officers various different medical issues and the specific TSA procedure for screening travelers with these issues;
- develop clear, uniformly-applied policies that reasonably limit the use and scope of “pat downs” for travelers with these medical devices. For instance, such a policy might limit the pat down to the location of a medical device only or dispense with it entirely under specified circumstances;
- develop training to ensure that the officers listen with respect to travelers who explain they have medical issues and be prepared to work with them to preserve their dignity;

- consider including someone who lives with one of these devices as part of their training sessions; and
- publicize the information card for people with medical issues that was developed to help travelers communicate these issues to TSA officers.

Rhonda Basha, Director, Office of Disability Policy and Outreach with TSA replied immediately with a link to the TSA's medical information cards. Although these cards are not yet posted on the TSA's website, they are available on BCAN's website here: <http://www.bcan.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/TSA-Notification-Cards.pdf>.

A copy of the letter is available on BCAN's website here: <http://www.bcan.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/BCAN-Letter-to-TSA.pdf>. In addition to the Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network, the organizations signing the letter were: Advocacy for Patients with Chronic Illness, Inc.; American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases; American Diabetes Association; American Gastroenterological Association; The American Neurogastroenterology and Motility Society; American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition; Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization; Association of Gastrointestinal Motility Disorders, Inc.; C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition; Celiac Sprue Association; Colon Cancer Alliance; Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America; Digestive Disease National Coalition; Hepatitis Foundation International; International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders; Interstitial Cystitis Association; Gastroparesis Patient Association for Cures and Treatments; The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness; National Pancreas Foundation; The Oley Foundation; Pull-thru Network, Inc.; United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc.; and Youth Rally Inc. The Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society and Inspire (www.inspire.com) also endorse this letter.

About the Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network

The Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN – *pronounced beacon*) is the first national advocacy organization dedicated to improving public awareness of bladder cancer, advancing bladder cancer research and providing information and support to people affected by bladder cancer. Founded in May 2005, BCAN is a cooperative effort among bladder cancer survivors, their loved ones and the medical community. For more information, visit www.bcan.org or call 888-901-BCAN.

Traveling tips for people living with urostomies may be found on BCAN's website here: <http://www.bcan.org/facing-bladder-cancer/frequently-asked-questions/becoming-a-proactive-patient/travel-tips/>.

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