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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CANCER CENTER PART OF REVOLUTIONARY STATEWIDE UC COLLABORATION TARGETING BREAST CANCER

FREMONT, CA (September 29, 2009) – The **Northern California Cancer Center (NCCC)** will contribute its expertise in managing large cohort studies and developing data-rich survey instruments to the University of California’s new and unprecedented statewide collaboration for breast cancer patients. The project’s goal is to revolutionize the course of patient care by designing and testing new approaches to research, technology and health care delivery. With 35 years of experience in conducting cancer surveillance in California, NCCC will contribute to the project by working to streamline and facilitate cancer surveillance, acting as formal liaison to the California Cancer Registry under the leadership of Research Scientist Christina Clarke, Ph.D.

The groundbreaking project, named the ATHENA Breast Health Network, will initially involve 150,000 women throughout California who will be screened for breast cancer and followed for decades through the five UC medical centers. ATHENA is a University of California system-wide project supported by a \$5.3 million University of California grant, and by a \$4.8 million grant from the Safeway Foundation.

The project is expected to generate a rich collection of data and knowledge that will shape breast cancer care in the way the renowned Framingham heart study changed the care of patients with heart disease.

"ATHENA is a model of multi-institutional collaboration and demonstrates the enormous potential in shared systems," said John D. Stobo, MD, UC senior vice president for health sciences and services. "This is a great example of the power of our statewide university network of academic medical centers; this initiative will demonstrate that the total of what can be accomplished by UC functioning as an integrated system can far exceed the sum of contributions by the individual campuses. ATHENA represents an unprecedented opportunity to play a leadership role in driving critical changes in health care. The public nature of the UC institutions make them uniquely positioned to study the appropriateness and effectiveness of treatment. It also allows for the applied use of new scientific evidence, much of which has been developed in the UC medical centers, to truly change the delivery of care."

In addition to NCCC, the large-scale demonstration project will involve the medical centers at UC San Francisco as the host campus, UC Davis, UC Los Angeles, UC San Diego,

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and UC Irvine. Also participating in the collaboration are the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, Quantum Leap Healthcare Collaborative, the National Cancer Institute's BIG Health Consortium, and the Center for Medical Technology Policy.

"We are excited to be supporting this innovative collaboration that, to date, has the clearest potential to produce ground breaking research that will bring us closer to a cure," said Larree Renda, Safeway Inc. Executive Vice President, Chief Strategist and Administrative Officer and Chair of the Safeway Foundation.

Breast cancer, the most common cancer in women, is a devastating and costly disease, striking more than 200,000 women annually and killing more than 40,000 women each year, according to the American Cancer Society. In the United States, more than \$20 billion is spent annually screening and treating the disease.

ATHENA is designed to more efficiently integrate financing, technology, research and clinical care, creating an infrastructure model that could be utilized for many medical conditions.

"Our goal is to improve survival and reduce suffering from breast cancer, to accelerate research and compress the time to implement innovations in clinical practice," said ATHENA principal investigator Laura Esserman, MD, MBA, professor of surgery and radiology, director of the UCSF Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center and co-leader of the breast oncology program at the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center.

"By working together as a community, the University of California medical centers, their affiliates, primary care and specialty physicians and patient advocates will work to change the options for patients today and create a better future for all women at risk for developing breast cancer," she added.

The UC system is particularly well-positioned for a project of ATHENA's magnitude because the medical centers annually screen as many as 80,000 women, and diagnose 2,500 patients with breast cancer. Still, said Esserman, the new project calls for "a re-imagining and then a re-engineering so that we can continually improve what we do -- to improve our current processes, to streamline communication and access to information among care providers and patients, and to improve the efficiency of services."

The potential rewards are significant, she stressed. "This project will standardize the collection of structured data from both patients and physicians so that it is computable, interoperable, and reusable, and it will integrate molecular profiling at the time of diagnosis, and create an unparalleled biospecimen repository. The result will be a network that enables personalized care informed by science and that fuels the accelerated and continuous improvement in treatment options and outcomes," said Esserman. "With ATHENA, wisdom will be waging war against breast cancer and the learning system will continue to evolve until we have cured this disease."

For more information about the Athena Breast Health Network, please go to <http://www.athenacarenetwork.org>.

About the Northern California Cancer Center

The Northern California Cancer Center (NCCC) is the only center in the country dedicated solely to cancer prevention research. It is recognized nationally as a leader in researching the causes

and patterns of cancer across the population and improving the prevention and detection of cancer. For more information, please visit NCCC's website at www.nccc.org.

About Safeway

Safeway is a Fortune 50 company and one of the largest food and drug retailers in North America based on sales. The company operates 1,739 stores in the United States and Canada and had annual sales of \$44.1 billion in 2008. The company's stock symbol is traded on the New York Stock Exchange. Safeway supports a broad range of charitable and community programs and in 2008 donated more than \$248 million to important causes, such as cancer research, education, hunger relief and programs focused on assisting people with disabilities.

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