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Team Draft to Kickoff National Lung Cancer Screening Event for Veterans at Walter Reed

Bethesda, MD (November 8, 2012) – In honor of Veterans Day weekend, Team Draft, in partnership with Lung Cancer Alliance (LCA) and Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), is joining with Walter Reed National Medical Center and select lung cancer screening centers across the country to offer lung cancer screenings to veterans. From November 8 through November 13, 2012 participating medical centers will invite veterans to complete a lung cancer risk assessment and learn about the risks and benefits of screening—information that could save their lives.

The national screening event kicks off at noon on Thursday, November 8, 2012, at Walter Reed during a ceremony honoring veterans. Team Draft's co-founder, nationally recognized health advocate and former NFL linebacker, Chris Draft, will serve as keynote speaker at the ceremony.

“Having played in the NFL for twelve years, I understand the importance of a strong team,” says Draft who lost his wife, Keasha, to lung cancer late last year. “It takes a team to tackle cancer, and we are proud to partner with Lung Cancer Alliance and Vietnam Veterans of America for this national initiative to take care of our veterans and shine the light on the critically important role early detection plays in providing real hope in the fight against lung cancer,” Draft continues.

Today, only 15% of lung cancers are diagnosed at an early, curable stage. But thanks to state-of-the-art screening techniques like those being implemented at Walter Reed and the other participating centers, lung cancer mortality rates have dropped by 20% in some patient groups. As Draft explains, “other cancers, like breast cancer and prostate cancer, have given us the playbook for lowering the lung cancer mortality rate, and it starts with early detection backed up by quality care.”

Screenings will take place at select centers across the county that follow the high standards outlined in the National Framework for Excellence in Lung Cancer Screening, which was developed by LCA to help insure lung cancer screenings are performed in a safe, effective and equitable manner consistent with the highest standards of care. These facilities include:

- Walter Reed National Medical Military Center, Bethesda, Maryland
- Lahey Clinic, Burlington, Massachusetts
- Middlesex Hospital Total Lung Care Center, Middletown, Connecticut

- Norton Healthcare, Louisville, Kentucky
- Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, New York
- St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, Phoenix, Arizona
- Swedish Cancer Institute, Seattle, Washington
- Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, Miami, Florida
- WellStar Health System, Atlanta, Georgia

Team Draft would also like to extend a special thank you to the Washington Redskins for their continued support of our veterans and to the players and cheerleaders who will attend the November 8th kick off ceremony at Walter Reed.

The Facts About Lung Cancer

For decades, the facts regarding lung cancer have been sobering:

- Anyone can get lung cancer.
- Over 60% of lung cancers are diagnosed in people who never smoked or in former smokers.¹
- Lung cancer surpassed breast cancer as the #1 cancer killer for women in 1987.²
- Lung cancer kills more people than any other cancer³, and takes more lives than breast, cervical, and prostate cancers . . . *combined*.⁴
- The five year survival rate for lung cancer is just 16%—a rate that has changed very little since the 1970's.⁵

But now there is *HOPE!* The use of state-of-the-art lung cancer screening techniques is reducing mortality rates in some patient groups⁶ while cutting-edge team-based, multidisciplinary treatment procedures are improving the quality of life for lung cancer patients across the country. And thanks to advances in molecular tumor mutation testing, researchers and treating physicians are developing effective personal treatments designed to extent and, ultimately, save lives.⁷

About Team Draft

Team Draft, an initiative of the Chris Draft Family Foundation, was created by Chris Draft and his late wife Keasha during Keasha's year-long struggle with Stage IV Lung Cancer. While attending Clemson University, Keasha was a member of the Rally Cat's dance squad before

¹ Brigham and Women's Hospital, Women's Health Policy & Advocacy Program, *Out of the Shadows: Women and Lung Cancer* (2010), at 4.

² American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures 2011*, at 15.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Out of the Shadows*, at 4.

⁵ *Cancer Facts & Figures*, at 16; *Out of the Shadows*, at 9; American Cancer Society, *Cancer Statistics 2009: A Presentation From the American Cancer Society*, at 22.

⁶ *Cancer Facts & Figures*, at 15.

⁷ *Out of the Shadows*, at 14.

graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering. After graduation, Keasha worked as an engineer while dancing for the NBA's Charlotte Hornets before working in the pharmaceutical industry. She was an energetic, vibrant young woman who had never smoked when she was diagnosed with Stage IV Lung Cancer in December 2010. At the time, her only "symptom" was a slight shortness of breath a few days earlier. Despite the diagnosis and knowing the long odds they faced, Keasha and Chris decided to fight back. On November 27, 2011, standing side-by-side, they launched Team Draft at their wedding. One month later, Keasha lost her courageous fight and died at the age of 38.

Team Draft is carrying on Keasha's fight and is dedicated to raising lung cancer awareness and increasing badly needed research funding by shattering the misconception that lung cancer is a "smoker's disease." ***The fact is anybody can get lung cancer.*** Yet, despite the fact that between 20,000 and 30,000 people who have never smoked—including Keasha—are diagnosed with lung cancer in the United States each year, the smoking stigma negatively impacts lung cancer research funding, which pales in comparison to funding for other major cancers and diseases. Team Draft is out to change all that by using the unique platform available to Chris as a nationally recognized community leader and health advocate and former NFL player to lead ***a National Campaign to Change the Face of Lung Cancer***—a campaign that has taken us to more than 50 of the top cancer treatment and research centers in North America. To learn more about Team Draft, share the facts about lung cancer, and support the National Campaign, please visit www.teamdraft.org.

About Lung Cancer Alliance

Lung Cancer Alliance, www.lungcanceralliance.org, is committed to ending injustice and saving lives through an alliance of advocacy, education and support. LCA provides live, professional support, referral and information services for patients, their loved ones and those at risk for lung cancer; conducts national awareness campaigns; and advocates for multiple millions in public health dollars for lung cancer research.

About Vietnam Veterans of America

Vietnam Veterans of America, www.vva.org, is the only national Vietnam veterans' organization congressionally chartered and primarily dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's goals are to promote and support the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans, to create a new identity for this generation of veterans, and to change public perception of Vietnam veterans, at the same time that we live up to our founding principle of "Never again will one generation of American veterans abandon another generation." Therefore VVA is concerned about high lung cancer in every generation of veterans, from veterans who served in WWII & Korea to those serving in Afghanistan today.

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