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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AACI President Knudsen to Focus Two-Year Term on Mitigating Health Disparities

Karen E. Knudsen, MBA, PhD, is the new president of the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI). She began her two-year term today at the close of the virtual 2020 AACI/CCAF Annual Meeting. A member of AACI's Board of Directors since 2016, Dr. Knudsen chaired AACI's Annual Meeting Program Committee in 2017.

Dr. Knudsen is the third director of the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center (SKCC) at Jefferson Health, a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated Cancer Center since 1995. With oversight of the cancer care and cancer discovery mission in the Jefferson Health enterprise, Dr. Knudsen also serves as the executive vice president of Oncology Services for Jefferson Health, and is the chair and Hilary Koprowski Professor of the Department of Cancer Biology.

Under Dr. Knudsen's leadership, SKCC was evaluated as "Outstanding" in its most recent NCI renewal, and was one of only four cancer centers to be ranked "Exceptional" in Community Outreach and Engagement. SKCC has significantly extended the Center's reach since 2015, now delivering cancer care in three Advanced Care Hubs outside the main academic site and offering clinical trials in a two-state region.

Dr. Knudsen's own research centers on advanced prostate cancer, with a focus on successful conversion of translational discoveries into clinical interventions. She maintains an actively funded research program and serves on the Board of the American Association of Cancer Research, and on the NCI's Board of Scientific Advisors. She serves as an editor for several leading oncology journals and has received numerous awards for her accomplishments.

At the AACI/CCAF annual meeting, co-hosted by the Cancer Center Administrators Forum, Dr. Knudsen announced plans for her presidential initiative, which will address cancer health disparities by leveraging the expertise of North America's 102 leading cancer institutes. Using a two-staged approach, the initiative will convert understanding of cancer disparities across AACI Centers into meaningful, measurable actions to improve the lives of cancer patients.

"Now more than ever, it is essential for the major cancer centers to join forces toward accelerating progress against cancer," said Dr. Knudsen. "The presidential initiative to reduce cancer disparities is just



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one arm of AACI strategies to increase the pace of positive change. I am honored to serve and counting on the partnership of all AACI centers toward common goals.”

The presidential initiative is one of several ways that AACI is working to confront the public health crises of systemic racism and discrimination and ensure that individuals from underrepresented groups are present at all levels of the cancer leadership pipeline.

“Dr. Knudsen’s presidential initiative provides an exciting platform for AACI cancer centers to promote diversity, inclusion, and equity in cancer research and care,” said AACI Executive Director Jennifer W. Pegher. “This project comes at a pivotal time for addressing cancer health disparities.”

In addition to appointing Dr. Knudsen, AACI members have elected **Caryn Lerman, PhD**, to a two-year term as vice president/president-elect of the board of directors. Dr. Lerman is director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center in Los Angeles.

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AACI’s mission is to accelerate progress against cancer by enhancing the impact of North America’s leading academic cancer centers. For more information, please visit aaci-cancer.org.