



Statement from The Wellness Community and Gilda's Club

The headquarter offices of The Wellness Community and Gilda's Club are pleased to announce that as of July 1, 2009, we have joined forces to become the largest provider of psychosocial cancer support in North America and will be extending our reach to even more people affected by cancer. Our combined organization will also be the largest employer of psychosocial oncology support professionals, advancing the idea that psychosocial care is as important as medical care in the face of a cancer diagnosis. Both Gilda's Club and The Wellness Community have grown extensively during our combined 45 year history to make a significant difference for people affected by cancer. Both organizations have also established solid, reliable reputations in the cancer community and share an unwavering commitment to quality, integrity and services based on the best research available to move our respective and complementary agendas forward.

In 2007, The Institute of Medicine (IOM), part of the National Academies in Washington, DC, released a report entitled, "Cancer Care for the Whole Patient: Meeting Psychosocial Health Needs." This report is a defining affirmation of the work of both The Wellness Community and Gilda's Club. The report states that today's cancer care does not adequately address the emotional, social, spiritual, or financial challenges associated with the disease. The report emphasizes that quality psychosocial care is critical in order for patients to have optimal clinical outcomes. The report goes on to state that community-based organizations are a crucial part of the health care delivery system and need to be better incorporated into the continuum of care.

Together, Gilda's Club and The Wellness Community will become the largest community-based organization focused on advancing the recommendations of the IOM report. The combined organization will be comprised worldwide of nearly 50 local affiliates, 12 affiliates in development and over 100 off-site and satellite locations. Both organizations will be formally integrating over the next few months, however, during this period, there will be no disruption of services at any Wellness Community or Gilda's Club. As we continue to work towards integration, we are confident that this joint venture will help us reach our goal to serve 1 million people affected by cancer by 2012 and continue to empower individuals to take active roles during treatment and beyond.

On November 7, 2009, The Wellness Community and Gilda's Club will host a Cancer Summit in Washington, DC, to formally introduce the newly unified organization and vision. People with cancer, survivors, caregivers, health care professionals, and health care leaders will be invited to this milestone event, which will mark a new beginning of the highest quality cancer support for the millions of people facing this disease.