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DR. KAREN ORLOFF KAPLAN IS NAMED ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Washington, D.C. – *February 1, 2008.* Dr. Karen Orloff Kaplan, a nationally recognized health advocate, administrator, policy expert and researcher, has been appointed executive director of the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance, effective February 4, 2008. The Alliance is the nation's leading advocacy, education and awareness organization that unites individuals and organizations working to conquer ovarian cancer.

Dr. Kaplan previously directed the Access to Health Care project for the Cancer Action Network, a nonprofit, nonpartisan sister advocacy organization of the American Cancer Society. At the Cancer Action Network, she was responsible for leading strategic planning and project management. Prior to that, she was director of special initiatives for the Wye River Group on Health Care and a consultant to the American Cancer Society on palliative care.

“With her extensive experience in health and aging issues, palliative care and health and social policy development, Dr. Kaplan adds a unique depth of experience,” said Judith S. Abrams, president of the Alliance’s Board of Directors. “She joins us at a seminal moment. We have recently launched the first National Agenda for Ovarian Cancer. Among her many charges will be to work over the next decade to double federal research for ovarian cancer and to ensure that every woman with the disease has access to quality care.”

While overall cancer rates are declining nationally, ovarian cancer is as deadly as ever. The death rate has remained the same for 30 years. The overall five-year survival rate for all women with ovarian cancer is only 45 percent, compared to 73 percent for cervical cancer and 89 percent for breast cancer. Funding for ovarian cancer research lags significantly behind most other cancers from a survival perspective, although it is the deadliest gynecologic cancer and the fifth leading cause of cancer death among women.

“Advances for ovarian cancer will occur only if we mobilize a powerful national movement to demand change beginning with vastly increased attention to research,” Dr. Kaplan said. “There is no effective screening test for ovarian cancer and new treatments have been ineffective.”

Dr. Kaplan also noted that “as researchers focus on screening and treatment, we must also make sure that every woman at risk for ovarian cancer knows its symptoms and everyone of their doctors knows how to respond quickly to those symptoms. The time to act is now.”

Dr. Kaplan succeeds Sherry Salway Black, who is stepping down to spend more time with her family and work at the community level.

Prior to working with the American Cancer Society, Dr. Kaplan was president and chief executive officer of Last Acts Partnership. She also served as national program director for Last Acts: Care and Caring Near the End of Life.

Dr. Kaplan holds a Doctor of Science degree and a Master’s degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University. She also has a master’s degree in social work from Ohio State University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Goucher College. She is the author or co-author of five books.

Established in 1997, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance is the foremost advocate for ovarian cancer in the United States. Until there is a cure for the disease, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance, a 501(c) (3) organization, leads the national initiative to conquer ovarian cancer by uniting individuals and organizations at the local, state, and national levels to advance ovarian cancer research in the quest for early detection tests, improved health care practices, and development of life-saving treatment protocols.

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