

A Fresh Look at Prostate Cancer Advocacy

By: Peter Scholz

This past September, hundreds of advocates and prostate cancer patients gathered in Washington D.C. for the annual ZERO Prostate Cancer Summit. ZERO is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to raise awareness for prostate cancer. This year we partnered with them to host our second ZERO Prostate Cancer Run in Southern California.

At this annual summit, the intent was to bring awareness of prostate cancer issues to the attention of the government, particularly in the wake of the Task Force’s recommendation to forgo routine PSA screening. The objective was to meet with government representatives and senators to raise awareness for Prostate Cancer and the need for continued support for funding Prostate Cancer research.

I recently joined the PCRI back in August, fresh out of UCLA with a degree in English. Starting out, I was only vaguely familiar with issues in the prostate cancer world and knew only as much as my dad, Dr. Mark Scholz, would mention in passing over dinner. As it is a writer’s responsibility to know the audience, what better way to learn than to be fully immersed in an event filled with patients and advocates who share a passion for bringing to light issues that affect so many patients and loved ones.

I was eager to accompany our Senior Educational Facilitator, Jan Manarite to the Summit this year. On the first day of the event, we met in D.C. set up our exhibitor table and discussed our objectives for the meeting. Jan encouraged me to speak with the other attendees and hear their stories to get a sense of their concerns. I attended the first-timer’s meeting to get a sense of what I should expect. I began to realize the range of people that prostate cancer affects.

Later that day ZERO had a reception scheduled in the Hart Senate building where all of the attendees had the opportunity to mingle with some of the congressmen. Senator Jeff Sessions addressed the group in a compelling keynote speech expressing strong criticism for the Task Force’s recommendation and encouraged all of us to take action and fight for favorable government legislation. At this gathering I had the opportunity to speak with other advocates from all across the states as well as representatives of the pharmaceutical world.

The next day the attendees had a full schedule of meetings and breakout sessions that gave suggestions on how people can become more involved in prostate cancer research and fundraising. Jan was asked by Kevin Johnson of ZERO to help lead the breakout sessions about getting involved in research. I chose to attend the sessions that briefed the attendees about what to expect when meeting with government representatives and senatorial staff.

On Thursday, a total of 117 meetings took place between the summit’s attendees and government representatives. Patients and advocates had the opportunity to share their stories with their representatives and discuss where they stood on government legislation concerning prostate cancer.

Overall I was blessed with the opportunity to directly converse with those affected by the disease, as well as learn important concepts about activism and fundraising. The event was well structured and informative. I am thankful for what this opportunity has taught me. □





SAVE THE DATE!
2014 Prostate Cancer Conference
September 5-7, 2014

Conference Agenda*

Laurence Klotz, M.D., FRCS(C)	Active Surveillance for Low-Risk Prostate Cancer
Maha Hussain, M.D.	Advanced Prostate Cancer
Anthony Zeitman, M.D., MBBS	Intermediate and High Risk Disease
John Mulhall, M.D.	Sexual Complications of Treatment
Klotz, Hussain, Zeitman, Mulhall	Round Table
Mark Moyad, M.D., MPH	Diet & Dietary Supplements and Prostate Health
Snuffy Myers, M.D.	Immune Therapy
Mark Scholz, M.D.	Treating PSA-Relapsed Disease

*Subject to change

**Mark your calendars,
We'll see you next year!**