



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Leigh Ann Bradley
(703) 548-0019

NPAF Volunteer Advocate from Michigan's 12th District Participates in Town Hall Meeting with Congressman Levin to Stress Passage of Health Care Reform Legislation this Year

Patient Shares Personal Challenges, Frustrations with Current Health Care System Due to Pre-Existing Conditions, Unemployment and Denied Insurance Claims

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 24, 2009) – Volunteer Advocate Heather Manning from the National Patient Advocate Foundation who lives in Michigan's 12th District, attended a Town Hall Meeting arranged by Congressman Sander Levin to discuss challenges and solutions to America's health care system, among other issues. But most important, Ms. Manning was there to encourage Representative Levin in his continued efforts to pass historic health care reform this year.

Ms. Manning came to the Town Hall Meeting with a common story of frustration with today's healthcare system, including access issues, prescription and treatment co-pay expenses and medical debt crisis. Ms. Manning is a single mother of a 14 year old son, works full time and has medical insurance. In June 2008, she was diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer, making her the fourteenth woman in her family to get this dreadful disease. Unfortunately, she is one of only a few who are still alive.

Over the past year, Ms. Manning has had chemotherapy, radiation, and a variety of surgeries and hospitalizations. During this time, she worked a minimum of 20 hours a week because she could not afford to go on disability or to lose her medical insurance.

"It has been difficult to work fewer hours, get paid less and then turn around and pay thousands of dollars in medical bills. My co-pays for treatments, prescriptions, appointments and hospitalizations have put me in a financial crisis. And I am behind on all my bills because of my illness," said Heather Manning, a resident of Clinton Township.

As more Americans face a financial crisis due to medical debts, patients are often unable to access life-saving treatments or even basic care. Globally, more than sixty percent of all patients who contacted PAF in 2008 reported debt crisis issues as their primary concern. Ninety-three percent of these patients were

insured through plans, but were still unable to obtain physician-prescribed healthcare despite coverage, reflecting an alarming trend of medical debt crisis issues in the nation's healthcare system.

“By continuing to fight for health care reform that addresses the all-too-common obstacles involving access issues, prescription and treatment co-pay expenses and medical debt crisis, Representative Levin has continued to show leadership among his constituents and in Congress,” said Nancy Davenport-Ennis, Founder and CEO of PAF and the National Patient Advocate Foundation – PAF's sister organization dedicated to the mission of creating avenues of improved patient access to health care through public policy reform at the state and federal levels. “We are proud to work with Rep. Levin to ensure that this vital legislation is enacted and to ensure that patients across the nation are protected from health care discrimination and the many forms that takes.”

PAF provides assistance to patients from all geographic regions of the country, serving patients from all 50 states and both U.S. territories. In 2008, Michigan was one of the top 20 referral states with 2.22% of the total PAF patient population. We received 211,023 requests for information from Michigan residents and provided direct mediation services to 532 patients in the state.

###

For more information see www.patientadvocate.org or www.npaf.org.