



## Lustgarten Foundation and Northwell Health Team Up for Long Island Pancreatic Cancer Research Walk

*Thousands Participate in the Nineteenth Annual Walk at Jones Beach State Park*

**Woodbury, N.Y., October 2, 2019** – On Sunday, Oct. 6 the Lustgarten Foundation and Northwell Health Cancer Institute will walk to raise awareness and research funding for pancreatic cancer—a disease with a five-year survival rate in the single digits. The walk, now in its nineteenth year, has raised nearly \$16,600,000 for pancreatic cancer research since inception.

“There has never been a more hopeful time in pancreatic cancer research and with the support of Northwell Health, we will be able to bring better treatment options and outcomes to patients right here on Long Island,” said Kerri Kaplan, President and CEO of the Lustgarten Foundation, the world’s largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research.

Northwell Health is a presenting sponsor for five of the Lustgarten Foundation Pancreatic Cancer Research Walks in the New York metropolitan area this year and has recently opened a multidisciplinary center that will tackle pancreatic cancer from all angles, providing surgery, medical and radiation oncology, and palliative care.

“Through our collaboration with the Lustgarten Foundation, we hope our sponsorship of New York area walks not only increases public awareness about pancreatic cancer but moves us closer to finding a cure for this disease through innovative research aimed at advancing more novel clinical trials for patients,” said Dr. Richard Barakat, physician-in-chief and director of Northwell Health Cancer Institute. “It’s very inspiring to be with thousands of people, including clinicians and patients of Northwell’s Pancreatic Cancer Center, who all share the same mission of fighting this disease together.”

In October 2018, Irv Pakula, 76, of Long Island, was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. The grandfather of six credits his wife, Faye, with saving his life. Irv had lost 25 pounds and Faye insisted he get several medical tests—which resulted in his diagnosis and came as a complete shock to Irv. “It was like getting hit in the back of the head with a brick,” he said.

The couple quickly mobilized and acted. Irv consulted experts at Northwell Health’s Pancreatic Cancer Center, close to his home. Due to the cancer spreading, Irv was not a candidate for surgery. A medical oncologist at the center, Dr. Craig Devoe, recommended a clinical trial to Irv. Over the course of several months, Irv had a remarkable response to treatment; his tumors shrunk 80 percent.

Today, Irv has more energy, his appetite has returned, and he has gained weight back. Irv, Faye and their family will have a team of nine at the Lustgarten Walk—Long Island. “Together, we are taking on the battle,” said Irv. “My wife and I are celebrating our 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on Oct. 2. I am looking forward to many more happy milestones. My family is everything to me.”

Research is changing the way patients are being treated. Results, like Irv's, demonstrate the need for continued collaboration between research foundations and medical institutions to move the needle for this disease and create more long-term pancreatic cancer survivors.

### **About the Lustgarten Foundation**

The Lustgarten Foundation is the largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research in the world. Based in Woodbury, N.Y., the Foundation's mission is to cure pancreatic cancer by funding scientific and clinical research related to the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of pancreatic cancer; providing research information and clinical support services to patients, caregivers and individuals at high risk; and increasing public awareness and hope for those dealing with this disease. Since its inception, Lustgarten Foundation has directed \$186 million to research and has assembled the best scientific minds with the hope that one day, a cure can be found. Thanks to separate funding to support administrative expenses, 100% of your donation goes directly to pancreatic cancer research. For more information, visit [www.lustgarten.org](http://www.lustgarten.org).

### **About Northwell Health Cancer Institute**

Northwell Health Cancer Institute helps patients throughout the greater New York City area survive and thrive, both during and after cancer care. Committed to cancer prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, research and survivorship, the Cancer Institute's disease-focused, multidisciplinary teams provide holistic care, treating patients' cancer, as well as other existing medical conditions. Our experts provide comprehensive, compassionate care through innovative clinical trials, state-of-the-art medical and radiation oncology treatments and leading-edge surgical techniques. More people from Long Island, New York City and Westchester choose Northwell for cancer care than any other health system—which means you have access to the most experienced cancer fighters in the state. To learn more, go to [Northwell Health Cancer Institute](#).