

## ASH 2009 - IMF ADVOCACY BOOTH

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“As part of the broader IMF mission, we are leading a coalition of blood cancer organizations in calling for improved access to research and resources, as well as equitable insurance coverage and reimbursement for patients with hematologic malignancies until cures are found. The IMF's Cancer Patient Statement of Principles initiative hosted a booth at ASH, and this inaugural effort was quite successful.”

- Brian G.M. Durie, MD

Along with the IMF's coalition partners, the MDS Foundation (MDSF) and Tackle Cancer Foundation (TCF), the IMF brought our Cancer Patient Statement of Principles to the 2009 meeting of the American Society of Hematology (ASH) in New Orleans. The principles emphasize equal insurance coverage, prevention research, continued innovation, early approvals, and expanded access to experimental drugs. Since the launch of our national advocacy initiative and the introduction of our principles at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) in May of this year, the IMF has gained support of myeloma patients nationwide, built an active legislative campaign (see <http://www.capwiz.com/myeloma>), and secured bi-partisan support for state and federal initiatives that address the issues raised by this program.

The ASH meeting was the perfect platform for our patient advocates to inform researchers, clinicians, industry, and the media about the issues they face while living with an incurable-but-treatable cancer. Such one-on-one interaction of the patients and the medical professionals working in myeloma helps build support for our joint cause, the ultimate cure of this disease. Patient advocates were also able to attend ASH sessions to learn about new treatments in the pipeline for treating myeloma.

One of the IMF patient advocates spent much of his time at ASH blogging from the IMF Statement of Principles booth. “The IMF has been working hard to organize the cancer community and to lobby Congress to help cancer patients,” he says. “I am so blessed to be healthy enough to learn and share anything and everything I can with my fellow

myeloma patients. It is a responsibility I take very seriously.” And this is a responsibility we at the IMF take seriously too as we move ahead to help assure not only continuing research and development of new treatments, but that patients have ready access to those treatments. Attendance at ASH was one small but critical step in this effort. **MT**