Three sports legends team up to battle #1 cancer killer

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Lung Cancer Alliance Launches National Public Awareness Campaign

Three of the most recognized names in professional sports are teaming up in the fight against the nation's number-one cancer killer -- lung cancer.

Hall of Fame Quarterback Troy Aikman, Hall of Fame Shortstop Cal Ripken Jr., and Emmy-award winning sportscaster Joe Buck, have joined Lung Cancer Alliance (LCA), the only national non-profit organization dedicated solely to advocating for people living with lung cancer or those at risk for the disease, as national spokesmen.

All three legends are part of a nationwide awareness campaign that includes print and electronic public-service announcements. The campaign theme, A Face In the Fight, seeks to unify supporters to help promote the importance and value of early detection and treatment, and to encourage more government funding for research.

"The participation of these sports greats in the fight against lung cancer is a watershed moment for the entire lung cancer community," said Laurie Fenton, president of the Lung Cancer Alliance. "By speaking out about lung cancer, these three men will help bring about the compassion and support so long overdue for this disease."

Buck and Ripken both lost their fathers to the disease. "Lung cancer has been the leading cause of cancer deaths for decades, yet the five year survival rate of fifteen percent has barely budged. This has to change," says Buck. Adds Ripken, "It kills more people than all the major cancers, but remains the least funded. It's an unbelievable contradiction and one that needs to end, now."

Aikman's connection to the disease is through the death of his wife's grandmother. "I'm involved not simply to raise awareness for a disease that has been ignored far too long in our country, but to spark change in the way it's perceived, diagnosed, and treated to hopefully and ultimately save lives."