



Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2017

COACH TO CURE MD CELEBRATES 10TH SEASON WITH COACHES WEARING SIDELINE PATCH FOR GAMES ON SEPT. 30 Effort Among Participating Coaches Has Grown By More Than 325 Percent Since 2008

WACO, TX – For the 10th-consecutive year, college football coaches nationwide will join in support of the *Coach To Cure MD* program, held during games of **Saturday, Sept. 30, 2017**. The annual effort has raised more than a \$1.5 million to battle Duchenne muscular dystrophy (Duchenne).

On the weekend of **Sept. 30**, American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) members will once again wear the traditional *Coach To Cure MD* logo patch on the sidelines, and college football fans will be asked to donate to research projects supported by Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD), the largest, most comprehensive nonprofit organization in the U.S. focused entirely on Duchenne. Many of those games will recognize a local Duchenne family on the field before or during the game.

Coach To Cure MD began in 2008 with more than 200 schools and 2,675 coaches involved. Ten years later, that effort has expanded to 620 different schools and more than 11,350 coaches wearing the logo patch on the sidelines and participating in *Coach To Cure MD* events – **a growth of more than 325 percent**.

Football fans can help support the fight to end Duchenne by either going online to CoachtoCureMD.org or by **texting the word CURE to 50555 to make a \$10 donation** in honor of this year's anniversary.

Duchenne muscular dystrophy is the most common fatal genetic disorder diagnosed during childhood, primarily affecting boys of all races and cultures. People with Duchenne develop progressive muscle weakness that eventually causes loss of mobility, wheelchair dependency, and a decline in respiratory and cardiac function. Currently, there is no cure for Duchenne. But thanks to Coach To Cure MD and the work of Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy, there is hope.

Ten years ago, few people in America knew about Duchenne and fewer still had reason to hope that any treatment for the lethal genetic disorder was on the horizon. But thanks in part to college football coaches, awareness of the disorder is at an all-time high and new treatments are in the pipeline – including two recently approved therapies – giving optimism for the families battling this progressive muscle disorder.

“We’re thrilled and excited that we’ve reached the milestone of 10 consecutive seasons for our coaches to bring awareness to Duchenne muscular dystrophy through *Coach To Cure MD*,” said Todd Berry, AFCA Executive Director. “What began as a great idea in 2008 has grown to a tremendous dedication of support from college coaches at all levels of the game, and we look forward to our biggest season yet on Sept. 30.”

“I was proud to be a part of the AFCA Board that adopted this cause and I am proud of all the work our coaching profession has done to give these boys a voice,” said Arizona Coach Rich Rodriguez, the 2017 President of the AFCA.

Rodriguez has supported Coach to Cure MD from its inception, having appeared in national television ads promoting the cause and hosting Jett Skousen, a young man battling Duchenne on his campus to help bring this charity effort to life for Wildcat fans. Many other coaches will also host families affected by Duchenne on campus Sept 30.

“Once you meet these courageous families, you will want to do everything you can to help find a cure for this awful disorder,” Rodriguez said. “They show a fight and a determination that just makes you want to get on their team.”

In addition to the coaches’ efforts, families affected by Duchenne will also gather for fundraising tailgate parties on campuses around the country to encourage more fans to get involved.

“We couldn’t do this without the commitment from all of the coaches in the AFCA,” said Pat Furlong, founding president and CEO of PPMD. “The awareness raised for Duchenne has been nothing short of incredible, and we continue to raise more money every year as a result. Because of the dedication of every coach that wears a patch in honor of our families and thanks to college football fans nationwide, we continue to move closer to the day we end Duchenne. We are counting down the minutes to Game Day on Sept. 30 and we are so grateful to everyone who has joined our team these last 10 years!”

About the AFCA

The American Football Coaches Association was founded in 1922 and is considered the primary professional association for football coaches at all levels of competition. The 11,000-member organization includes more than 90 percent of head coaches at the 700-plus schools that sponsor football at the college level. Members include coaches from Europe, Canada, Australia, Japan and Mexico.

About PPMD

Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD) is the largest, most comprehensive nonprofit organization in the United States focused on finding a cure for Duchenne muscular dystrophy – our mission is to end Duchenne.

We invest deeply in treatments for this generation of people affected by Duchenne and in research that will benefit future generations. We advocate in Washington, D.C., and have secured hundreds of millions of dollars in funding. We demand optimal care, and we strengthen, unite and educate the global Duchenne community.

Everything we do – and everything we have done since our founding in 1994 – helps people with Duchenne live longer, stronger lives. We will not rest until every person has a treatment to end Duchenne. Go to www.ParentProjectMD.org for more information or to learn how you can support our efforts and help families affected by Duchenne. Follow PPMD on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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