



| FROM THE EDITOR |

## A Sure Win

by Lee E. Mortenson, DPA

The Association of Community Cancer Centers' 30th anniversary is an ideal opportunity to reflect on the past. Behind us are a number of heroes and heroines who made a huge difference to those of us now in the field. These many individuals gave their time and talent strictly out of personal support for the idea of quality cancer care. Oftentimes the road was not easy and brought real sacrifices—both personally and professionally. But without these individuals, the organization which many of us now take as a “given” would not be here.

Still, there's more ahead of us than behind us. We look forward to exciting new therapies and treatments. We also anticipate fewer caregivers, more restricted patient access, and increased numbers of people with cancer. The challenges of cancer care delivery are not simple and neither is finding the answers.

Christian Downs, ACCC's deputy director, and I have spent some time talking about ACCC's unique position to serve its members and their patients and families in addressing these challenges. Going forward, ACCC is committed to three core areas: advocacy, education, and support of state-based oncology organizations.

On the advocacy front, ACCC looks forward to continuing its success in working with policymakers to ensure patient access to cancer therapies. As it has in the past, much of our policy success will be based on our ability to provide clear and accurate data and information to policymakers about “what's happening on the ground” in cancer programs. We will continue to work collaboratively with other provider and patient groups on issues of concern to the broad cancer community.

As managing and delivering cancer care become more complex, providing the membership with educational opportunities is critical. Patients will have access to the most effective therapies in the future only if the oncology provider community learns how to deliver care more efficiently with the resources that are available.

ACCC initially established the Center for Provider Education as a resource for its membership to learn about the basics of billing and coding and to understand how to deliver some of the most costly and complex therapies. In 2004 and beyond, the Center for Provider Education will expand its course offerings to include many more topics, from how to run an efficient oncology practice to pharmacoeconomics for hospital pharmacies to recruiting staff. The center relies on educators with expertise in management of hospital-based cancer programs, office-based practices, financial analysis, policy and reimbursement, marketing, and healthcare economics.

Finally, ACCC is committed to supporting state-level oncology organizations. ACCC will continue to provide the management infrastructure for state societies that allow these groups to go about educating their members. At the same time, ACCC is moving full-speed ahead with a comprehensive program for state societies that will provide reimbursement assistance, help in off-label coverage, and reimbursement education services for staff and physicians.

Sure, the challenges we face in the future are daunting. But ACCC is here (and will be here for another 30 years—and more) to serve its membership.