

ACCC Members Invited to Join NCI's Online eHealth Research Community



Medical research can take 17 years to move from journal article to implemented intervention. To expedite the “discovery-to-delivery” process, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has designed a new initiative called the eHealth Express. Its goal: advance the science and implementation of evidence-based eHealth solutions and products in cancer care.

To move advances more rapidly from bench to bedside, NCI seeks to increase the number of eHealth research and development projects, particularly in informatics and communication systems, that are designed to improve the quality of cancer care. And NCI is inviting ACCC members to become involved in its new online community.

“We believe one of the barriers to the implementation of our cancer communication and informatics research is the lack of involvement of oncology professionals, patients, and caregivers,” said Brad Hesse, PhD, acting chief of the Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch. “Involvement by ACCC members offers a great opportunity for behavioral scientists to conduct their research in the context of community cancer centers and for community cancer centers to participate in cutting-edge health informatics research,” he said.

To join the online community, simply register on the eHealth Express web site at www.ehealthexpress.cancer.gov.

Participants in the eHealth Express community have access to:

- Online and archived grant proposal workshops and training sessions
- Profiles of eHealth Express members, including providers, patients, caregivers, researchers, and developers
- Opportunities to collaborate with NCI on user-driven R&D projects, tested in cancer care settings
- Resources recommended by colleagues.

Margaret Riley, MN, RN, CNAA, director of the Specialty Center for Cancer Care and Research at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Atlanta and former ACCC president, is serving as ACCC's liaison with NCI on this effort. She expressed enthusiasm for the partnership, “The community cancer centers are where the majority of patients with cancer receive their care. Our oncology professionals, patients, and caregivers will help ground health informatics research in the realities of our needs and priorities,” Riley said.

eHealth Express Workshops

Via the eHealth Express web site, an online workshop series will serve as a forum in which an ehealth strategic

research and development (R&D) agenda will be developed by participating ACCC members and ehealth researchers. The goal of the research agenda is to blend the requirements of the user community with the science of health informatics and communication systems.

Andrew Barbash, MD, will lead these workshops. Barbash is currently Chief Medical Officer of Laxor, LLC. He is working with ACCC leadership and NCI program managers on a draft ehealth R&D agenda. Barbash, a noted expert on the personal health record and director of the Stroke Care Program at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Md., has served in a similar capacity in the past.

“My work at Kaiser for over eight years in the development and deployment of the Mid-Atlantic area's current electronic health record, helped me realize how important it is for health researchers to understand the issues involved in clinician-patient and clinician-clinician workflow in order to help lead the industry in guiding future efforts to enhance health care relationship management,” Dr. Barbash said. “This series of workshops is designed to bring those at the bedside and ehealth researchers around a ‘virtual table’ whereby R&D projects can be developed. We hope that together, ACCC members and ehealth researchers will design research proposals that will be competitive for NCI funding.”

Planned for the summer of 2005, the workshop series will be a continuation of a grant writing workshop series at NCI. These online workshops offer grant writing mentoring to ehealth researchers and developers. Archived workshops are available at www.ehealthexpress.cancer.gov, including a general overview of the NIH grant writing process, a simulated study section, and a section featuring small business innovation research grantsmanship.

Grant writing workshop participants have been enthusiastic about the program. Ninety percent of participants stated that they learned new and detailed information, liked having access to insider NCI experts, and believed that their confidence and understanding of the grant writing and submission process had increased.

For more information about the eHealth Express workshop series and how you can participate in the development of an ehealth research agenda, contact Linda Harris, PhD, at lindahealth@nih.gov. ■