

A Meeting of Like Minds

by E. Strode Weaver, FACHE, MBA, MHSA

By the time this column is published, it will be spring time again in Washington, D.C. While the cherry blossoms may not yet have bloomed, ACCC will have once again hosted its annual East Coast meeting. (This year, ACCC's 32nd Annual National Meeting was held March 14-17 in Arlington, Va.) Along with a wide variety of educational and networking opportunities, ACCC's annual meeting also heralded the election of a new board of directors and the end of my one-year term as ACCC President.

I have spent most of my term writing about patient safety. For my last column, I chose to return to some of the reasons why I joined ACCC and have spent many years supporting and working with the organization—education, advocacy, and networking. Those three words really sum up the Association's area of expertise. And many of these educational and networking opportunities have taken place at ACCC's two national meetings.

Personally, I've found ACCC meetings to be one of the most valuable member benefits. These conferences are truly forums where multidisciplinary cancer care teams come together and learn from experts in the field and each other. (ACCC is unique in that it is supported actively by a number of physician specialties, oncology nurses, hospital and practice administrators, social workers, pharmacists, and other professionals who provide cancer care throughout the United States.)

The benefits of coming to these meetings are numerous:

- Presentations on new technologies and treatment approaches

- Timely legislative and regulatory updates straight from Capitol Hill
- Information about the latest reimbursement changes
- Valuable forecasts about the future of cancer care delivery
- NCI reports about national research efforts.



In addition to expert speakers and presenters, ACCC meetings let us learn from our peers about:

- Innovative programmatic and personnel practices
- Opportunities to benchmark our services and programs to other cancer programs
- Insights on shared challenges and opportunities.

One of the best aspects about ACCC meetings is that they are "right sized" for the way that I like to learn and meet people socially. The meetings are large enough—usually around 500 people—to attract a wide variety of professions (i.e., physicians, medical directors, administrators, pharmacists, oncology nurses), but not so huge that you get "lost" in a 50-page program or an endless shuttle of buses. Perhaps most importantly, ACCC meetings have a unity of focus: services and care being provided for cancer patients. You might say that ACCC meetings are, in fact, "a meeting of like minds," offering tangible ideas and methods of improving the way we deliver care to our cancer patients.

Hopefully you were able to attend ACCC's 32nd Annual National Meeting. If not, I strongly urge you to put ACCC's 23rd National Oncology Economics Conference (September 13-16) and 2nd Annual Hospital Summit (December 7-8) on your calendars *today!* ☺

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