

ONCOLOGY ISSUES

The Journal of the
Association of Community Cancer Centers

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Oncology Issues serves the multidisciplinary specialty of oncology care and cancer program management.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Ready Player One

BY CHRISTIAN DOWNS, JD, MHA



Back in high school, one of my football coach's favorite methods of teaching was to gather the players in the film room and say something to the

effect of:

"Okay (insert the name of any flower native to southwest Virginia), today we're going to learn how to (insert whatever the team did wrong in the previous game). Watch this film and see how (insert any Hall of Famer) does it. See how easy that is? Now, do it like that (insert the name of another flower native to southwest Virginia)."

At the time I didn't appreciate his technique, but looking back I now understand that my coach was trying to teach the team through a real-world example or experience. Now, using Hall of Famers is not always the most effective motivator. And in all fairness to my coach, he would occasionally use our team players from time to time. In fact, ol' number 64 was called out plenty of times—as an example of what *not* to do.

Today, I'm going to take this lesson from my former football coach and apply it to this edition of *Oncology Issues*.

We've heard from many of our readers that they value the real-world experiences of other community cancer centers. In fact, most readers have said it's these experiences—successes, challenges, triumphs, and sometimes even hardships—that they are most interested in rather than whether or not the cancer program is demographically similar.

So let's take a look at some of the "experiences" shared in this issue.

In our cover story, Cecilia Zapata and her colleague Benjamin Greer explore the hot topic of academic medical center

and community cancer center affiliation. While the authors readily admit that there are no "cookie-cutter" approaches for this relationship model, they share their successful three-step affiliation process of assessments, site visits, and stakeholder reviews.

In another example of a shared experience, staff at Simmons Cancer Center writes about a programmatic evaluation that showed how they could improve care transitions across treatment settings. The solution: develop a patient and family focused transitional care program.

Finally, Aurora Health Care shares how it developed system-wide strategic planning for its multi-site robotically-assisted surgical program. The goal: to develop strategies to support adoption and growth of minimally invasive surgery while being mindful to demonstrate value, quality, and cost-effectiveness. Not doing robotic surgery? Take some of the principles and apply it to a program for genetic testing, Gamma Knife, or even molecular imaging.

If learning from shared experiences is for you, definitely check out ACCC's 2012 Innovator Awards, sponsored by GE Healthcare. In 2012, eleven ACCC member programs were selected by a panel of their peers to be recognized at the ACCC 29th National Oncology Conference in San Antonio, Tex., October 3–6, 2012. These innovators will share their forward-thinking strategic planning, creative solutions, and replicable models with meeting attendees.

So, come to San Antonio, learn from the experiences of ACCC's 2012 Innovator Award winners, and apply their lessons to your program. Who knows? Maybe next year, you'll hear:

"ACCC is proud to announce that (insert your cancer program here) is a 2013 Innovator Award winner!"

Take advantage of the early bird discount and register today! 