



Association of Community Cancer Centers

## ONCOLOGY ISSUES

The Journal of the  
Association of Community Cancer Centers

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## FROM THE EDITOR

# Back to the Future

BY CHRISTIAN G. DOWNS, JD, MHA



Back in 1962 the television cartoon “The Jetsons” premiered, offering viewers a glimpse of what the future might look like. (I know at least some of you will remember the cartoon’s catchy theme song.) More than 50 years later, it’s fun to look back and see what the show’s creators actually got right! For example, the cartoon—set in the year 2062—frequently featured George video-chatting with his grumpy boss, Cosmo Spacely. Today that technology is readily available and used by millions. Astronauts even Skype from the International Space Station! The more interesting question remains: now that we have this technology, when and how do we want to use it? Does anyone really want to see my mug filling up their Galaxy Tab screen? Give me a party line and a rotary dial phone any day.

As you read this edition of *Oncology Issues*, I want you to think about the cancer program of the future. “The Jetsons” also featured pills with tiny cameras to see the insides of a person; we have that technology now too. As you envision what the cancer program of the future might look like, try and imagine what the next Skype technology or the next endoscope capsule might be.

A great place to help you get started is Brendan Fitzpatrick and Chad Schaeffer’s cover article, “The Cancer Program Administrator of the Future.” As cancer care and cancer treatment have become increasingly more complex, so too has the role of these leaders. The authors note that visionary administrators must be leaders with a broad and deep knowledge of the oncology service line and industry, capable of functioning seamlessly in a matrixed environment and communicating effectively with multiple stakeholders—staff, clinicians, members of the C-Suite, patients, and payers, just to name a few.

Next, check out Ryan Langdale’s “Strategic Planning for the Oncology Service Line.”

Strategic planning is a tool we all use to plan where we want our program to be—in the short- and long-term future. This article offers tips for crafting an action-oriented strategic plan that is specific to the unique nature of cancer care, including a roadmap to get you started (or continue) on your journey.

In the “Center of It All,” Amber Gregg and Karen Schmidt focus on community needs assessments. These tools not only help cancer programs identify future needs, they help them develop and implement outreach strategies and programs to meet these community needs.

Of course any look into the future should include the ACCC 32nd National Oncology Conference, October 21-23, in Portland, Oregon. I urge you not to miss the chance to hear what your peers across the country are doing *today* to prepare for the future in areas such as cancer prehabilitation, cancer survivorship, and cancer research. At this meeting, ACCC will also release a white paper from its 2015 Institute for the Future of Oncology on integrated delivery networks in cancer. There is even a 2015 ACCC Innovator Award Winner presenting on implementation of real-time location systems—a technology that sounds straight out of “The Jetsons.” So remember, when you’re looking with an eye to the future—whether it’s as macro as new cancer delivery models or as micro as succession planning for your cancer program—ACCC has the resources and tools you need.