



Association of Community Cancer Centers

ONCOLOGY ISSUES

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FROM THE EDITOR

Innovation in Patient Care

BY CHRISTIAN DOWNS, JD, MHA



just to name a few. At the same time, on the periphery of this emerging science, some very interesting developments are taking place in the patient care arena.

For example, our cover article focuses on quality palliative care—a critical component of cancer care that has been gaining increased attention in recent years. In their article, Arif H. Kamal, MD, and colleagues share how a regional consortium on palliative care was able to develop and implement QDACT, a web-based quality assessment tool capable of providing real-time, quarterly, and ad-hoc feedback and reporting. After successful implementation of QDACT throughout the state of North Carolina, this 2014 ACCC Innovator Award Winner played a key role in efforts to expand QDACT's reach to a national stage.

This edition of *Oncology Issues* also features another 2014 ACCC Innovator Award Winner, William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Mich. In the article, "Closing a Gap in Cancer Care," Jan Akervall, MD, and colleagues describe how they implemented an outpatient weekly nutrition clinic for head and neck cancer patients that improved patient quality of life and reduced the cost of care. The evidence is clear: nutrition support is critical in helping improve patient outcomes in cancer care.

Our next feature article discusses a fairly new and emerging component of cancer care. I know you are all familiar with cancer rehabilitation, but have you ever heard the term cancer prehabilitation? In "Improving Patient Outcomes with Cancer Prehabilitation," Julie Silver, MD, shows how ACCC member programs are using cancer prehabilitation to help improve physical and functional outcomes that often translate to

Much of the recent media coverage about cancer has been scientific in nature—immunotherapy, biomarker testing, and new radiotherapeutic techniques,

a better quality of life for cancer patients. Read more about their successes and Dr. Silver's STAR (Survivorship Training and Rehabilitation) Program® Certification on pages 38-45.

Of course a critical component of the cancer care continuum is cancer prevention, and we can all agree that reaching kids and teenagers with important cancer education is key to cancer prevention in this country. In "Stop Cancer before It Starts," Melanie Gonzales, MSPH, MCHES, and Vicky Jekich, CMP, describe a comprehensive youth-based cancer prevention program that educates school-age children and teenagers on sun-safety, tobacco use, and nutrition and physical activity.

In our final feature article, author Amber Gregg discusses an issue that—while not directly related to cancer care—is critical to keeping the doors open at many cancer programs. In "A Well-Kept Secret," Gregg briefly explains the relationship between the community benefit standard and a non-profit hospital's tax exempt status, including tips on leveraging your cancer registry to document community benefits to key stakeholders—federal, state, and local governments.

So, yes, while the research and science in the field of cancer is exciting, let this edition of *Oncology Issues* be a reminder to us that not all advances come out of the lab.