

# The Evolution of OPEN

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In 2004 the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) launched the Oncology Pharmacy Education Network (OPEN), an initiative spearheaded by an ACCC pharmacist


member Ernie Anderson Jr., RPh, FASHP, who went on to serve as ACCC President 2008-2009. OPEN's goal: to engage the multidisciplinary team on issues (e.g., clinical, financial, and operational) that pharmacy providers face every day.

The practice of pharmacy, and in particular oncology pharmacy, has evolved through the years; it is no longer a discipline focused solely on drug therapy. The complexities of pharmaceutical care now encompass many domains of practice, which the clinical pharmacist must be equipped to deal with. True to its mission of advocacy, education, and multidisciplinary care, ACCC recognized the need for a platform to help pharmacy address these new complexities of evolving oncology care.

One way ACCC is meeting this need is through annual OPEN pre-conferences scheduled with the fall National Oncology Conference. These one-day programs offer sessions on cutting-edge oncology pharmacy issues and provide abundant peer-to-peer networking opportunities for pharmacists, administrators, and other cancer program staff with an interest in pharmacy concerns.

Last month's OPEN pre-conference, held in conjunction with the ACCC National Oncology Conference in Portland, Ore., had a phenomenal turnout. Session content was varied and generated some great discussions. Expert presenters led discussions on bundled payments, differences and benefits between hospital and private practice sites of service, distribution models and the challenges they present to oncology pharmacy and cancer programs, and budgetary projections for 2016 as new drugs, regulations, and technology continue to challenge all of us in the oncology community.

Recently, ACCC expanded OPEN's reach by initiating a series of regional OPEN meetings. This concept evolved from a local program, the New England Hematology Oncology Pharmacy Symposium (NEHOPS). The symposium was started nine years ago by a group of New England pharmacists with the goal of gathering the best oncology pharmacists in the nation to deliver cutting-edge talks on clinical oncology disease state management. Held annually in Massachusetts every October, this symposium has grown in attendance each year, which speaks to the program's value and quality. In 2015 ACCC partnered with NEHOPS to host three regional OPEN meetings in New Jersey, North Carolina, and Florida. In the future, ACCC looks to continue these types of collaborative opportunities for OPEN to ensure its membership and their multidisciplinary care teams across the country can gain critical insight on oncology pharmacy issues.

Today, the oncology pharmacy continues to evolve as cancer treatments become increasingly more complex and costly. As new payment models and programs develop and roll out with increasing frequency, it is now necessary for oncology pharmacists to understand the business and operational sides of oncology. Indeed, the future of cancer care in this country requires that *all* of our providers work at the top of their licenses and develop new skills to meet the challenges ahead. Thankfully ACCC has the tools and resources to help, including the white paper, "Dispensing Pharmacy: A Value Proposition for Oncology Practices," which mailed with this edition of *Oncology Issues*. Stay tuned for more as OPEN continues to evolve. 

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