



Association of Community Cancer Centers

ONCOLOGY ISSUES

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

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FROM THE EDITOR.....

Cancer (and Lawn) Care

BY CHRISTIAN J. DOWNS, JD, MHA



When I write about an ACCC meeting it's usually to encourage you to attend an upcoming conference. This time around I'm taking a look back

at the ACCC 43rd Annual Meeting held in Washington D.C., at the end of March. One of ACCC's greatest strengths is the willingness—even eagerness—of our members to share their experiences and successes. And this meeting was no exception, exceeding all expectations for collaboration and networking on every front. Some of the energy and urgency we saw at this year's meeting may be attributed to the uncertain political and reimbursement landscape, yet most of the positive energy came directly from our members and their willingness to share how they are adapting and improving the services they provide to patients. Simply put, ACCC members left this meeting re-energized, ready to embrace whatever challenges arise and to excel.

This edition of *Oncology Issues* builds on these collegial themes: networking, collaborating, and sharing “how we did it” solutions to challenges.

In “Fox Chase Cancer Center *Care Connect*,” authors Kelly Filchner and Alan Howald detail how this ACCC member program recognized gaps in care coordination between oncology and primary care and developed a program to improve communication and education between the two care settings. For its efforts, Fox Chase received a 2016 ACCC Innovator Award.

Next, we hear from another 2016 ACCC Innovator Award winner, Moses Cone Health System, as author Matthew Manning shows how this ACCC member identified its high-cost patients, or “hot-spotters,” and put processes and systems in place to not only improve care for these patients but also reduce system costs. When payers cut costs, Manning writes, it's often like “mowing the grass.” The high-cost items (like the tallest

blades of grass) are the first to be cut down. By mining and analyzing claims data, his program was able to show that, in fact, the tallest blades were not high-cost drugs or new technologies, but “hot-spotter” patients. His article explores how ACCC members can take steps to reduce costs (“mow their own grass”) by improving management of these high-cost patients.

Author Dylan Zylla's article, “Improving Pain Management in Patients with Cancer,” showcases our final 2016 ACCC Innovator Award winning program, Park Nicollet Oncology Research and HealthPartners Institute, and its quality improvement initiative to collect personalized pain goals for patients. In addition to improving pain management in cancer patients, this initiative decreased financial toxicity—by reducing the number of high-cost, long-acting opioids prescribed—and staff time spent on prior authorizations and pre-approvals.

In our final feature article, “That's My Farmer,” ACCC member, Samaritan Cancer Program, shares the evolution of its research-based nutrition and wellness program, which educates cancer survivors through hands-on learning about nutrition, healthy food shopping and preparation, and the benefits of eating local fresh fruits and vegetables. Key to success: the collaborative relationships built between healthcare providers, educational institutions, local businesses, and area farmers.

While it's always beneficial to look back and recognize what we've learned from the past, we must use this knowledge to guide future efforts. So, let me conclude by talking up a meeting that you simply cannot afford to miss—the ACCC 34th National Oncology Conference, Oct. 18-20, 2017, in Nashville, Tenn. This premier “How To” meeting for the multidisciplinary cancer care team will showcase the 2017 ACCC Innovator Award winners and other ACCC member programs willing—and eager—to share effective, replicable strategies and best practices to improve your cancer service line. I look forward to seeing you there!