



Association of Community Cancer Centers

ONCOLOGY ISSUES

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FROM THE EDITOR

ACCC Efforts to Improve Access

BY CHRISTIAN DOWNS, JD, MHA



Ensuring patient access to cancer care is at the forefront of ACCC's mission. With a membership that encompasses thousands of different providers delivering care at programs and practices across the country, ACCC works to support its members in overcoming their unique access to care challenges.

A great resource for initiating conversations around patient access to cancer care is an annual report put out by the American Society of Clinical Oncology. (Access the ASCO 2017 State of Cancer Care in America online at: ascopubs.org/doi/10.1200/JOP.2016.020743). The report notes, "The U.S. cancer care system is far from providing adequate care for all its residents with cancer. Segments of the U.S. population remain uninsured and underinsured for cancer care, and despite insurance status, evidence-driven prevention, screening, treatment, and survivorship care are not reaching patients equitably."

ACCC is tackling the access issues mentioned in the ASCO report with several key initiatives.

First is the ACCC education program "Optimal Care Coordination Model for Lung Cancer Patients on Medicaid." To date, this program has engaged ACCC members, health system leaders, patient advocacy organizations, and others in the development of a coordination model that is now being tested through quality improvement initiatives at seven ACCC member programs. The aim: to develop a care coordination model that can be used at cancer programs across the country to improve outcomes for Medicaid patients by expanding access to and use of care. Learn more about this innovative education program online at: accc-cancer.org/carecoordination. Findings from this multi-year program will be shared with all ACCC members with the hope that (where applicable) programs and practices will be able to adapt this model for care coordination

for other cancers such as breast, colon, and prostate.

Next is the ACCC Financial Advocacy Network (FAN) initiative, developed in response to challenges patients face—first in accessing care and then in affording that care. FAN provides critical resources and strengthens the skills and knowledge base of providers who deal directly with patients on complex financial issues surrounding their cancer diagnosis and treatment. These tools and resources include the hugely successful FAN Boot Camp, a dynamic online curriculum to help providers acquire the key knowledge and strategies necessary to succeed in the increasingly essential field of oncology financial advocacy (accc-cancer.org/boot-camp).

Last but not least, ACCC has made a concerted effort within the pages of this journal to focus on access issues facing our patients, programs, and practices.

For example, in this issue, check out "The Community Health Worker," page 36, to read about a community cancer program's role in population health efforts. Learn from Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center's efforts to reach high-risk and underserved populations through unique community partnerships, including a mentorship opportunity with interns at a local Community Health Worker Certificate Program.

As the ASCO 2017 State of Cancer Care in America report concludes, "All stakeholders have a role to play. Capitalizing on these opportunities and addressing challenges will take greater commitment and collaboration than ever before."

ACCC looks forward to continuing to support its membership in serving all cancer patients—everywhere. 