

Reflect, Renew, Reignite!

BY TOM GALLO



As Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) President, I have the privilege to select a presidential theme that is incorporated into meetings and resources throughout the year. Choosing a

theme requires considering our current practice environment, as well as the needs and interests of our extremely diverse, multidisciplinary membership.

I had many ideas, and narrowing my focus to the final selection was a difficult and stressful process. I realize that my minor stress in making this decision is trivial, however, compared to the daily stress of trying to provide the best care to patients and their families going through the most difficult times of their lives.

Caring for cancer patients can be a drain—physically, intellectually, and emotionally—for each member of the multidisciplinary cancer care team, starting with the receptionist who greets the patients daily to the physician in whose hands patients place their total trust. Burnout is on the rise as oncology becomes increasingly complex with new treatment options, growing financial toxicity, an aging patient population, and an increasingly burdensome healthcare system, to name just a few stressors.

I've spent a lot of time visiting clinics throughout the country, and recently I've been struck by the frustration, demoralization, and even anger at "the system." On a personal note, the number of physicians I know who are happy to pull out their smartphones and tell me down to the minute when they are retiring is alarming. But concerns go well beyond physician burnout. The issue of burnout in our healthcare workers has received much media attention, with some calling it an "epidemic."

As I reflected on my presidential theme, I realized that burnout has a negative connotation, so I wanted to put a more positive spin on the issue—to move beyond shared complaints and horror stories to shared strategies and solutions to help combat the burnout and frustration we are all experiencing. I want the entire cancer care team to feel valued and fulfilled by the tremendous service they perform.


In March at the 44th ACCC Annual Meeting and Cancer Center Business Summit, I was proud to introduce my 2018–2019 presidential theme: **Reflect, Renew, Reignite: Creating a Resilient Oncology Team in Your Community.**

We tell caregivers daily that they need to take care of themselves in order to take care of their loved ones with cancer, but do we share that same message with the healthcare providers at our own cancer programs and practices? We should consider the following questions:

- How do we keep our cancer care team healthy and engaged?
- How do we structure our cancer care teams to be effective and productive?
- How do we foster an environment to help our cancer care team members focus on—and realize—the mission they envisioned when they entered this field?

After exploring these questions, I hope that ACCC as an organization can start to identify solutions for its members. Let's look to reduce the pain points that frustrate our physicians, nurses, social workers, administrators, pharmacists, and all of the other professionals who collaborate to provide the highest level of care to our patients. For our patients and the future of our programs, we must take the time and resources to develop engaged, high-functioning cancer care teams. There are some simple solutions—get rid of MACRA, MIPS, and redundancy and duplication in our EHRs. Eliminate bureaucracy and middlemen that add zero value to the patient experience. Develop a payment system that values caring for the patient and not merely checking boxes. I understand that these issues are beyond our power to resolve. Instead, I challenge you to work to create a system that works with these realities.

I look forward to a year when we will engage in conversations that allow ACCC members an opportunity to **REFLECT** on why they entered the field of oncology, to **RENEW** their commitment to their patients and programs, and to **REIGNITE** their energy, in part by empowering them through ACCC education and resources.

I look forward to working together to create a **RESILIENT** oncology team in your community, one that can withstand the myriad of challenges we face and adapt successfully to change. 

Coming in Your 2018 ONCOLOGY ISSUES

- ▶ Leveraging Online Learning Opportunities and Videos to Improve Patient Education
- ▶ Improving Cancer Screening and Treatment through a Focused Prostate Evaluation Program
- ▶ Development and Implementation of a Supportive Oncodermatology Clinic
- ▶ A Comprehensive, Lifelong Management Program for Hereditary and Other High-Risk Patients
- ▶ Wheels Up: Bringing Lung Cancer Education and Screening to Rural Patients
- ▶ A Perfect Fit: Mentoring Experienced RNs to Meet Oncology Clinic Demand
- ▶ Patient Care Connect—Lay Navigators Improve Quality and Reduce Cost of Care
- ▶ Removing Barriers in Cancer Detection: Getting LDCT Lung Cancer Screening to Work within a Network
- ▶ Development and Implementation of an HIV Oncology Program
- ▶ Improving the Care of Pediatric Radiation Oncology Patients
- ▶ Community-Based Psychological First Aid
- ▶ Safe Essential Oil Practice in Cancer Centers
- ▶ Tools to Improve Fertility Preservation Discussions for Adolescent and Young Adult Male Oncology Patients