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Come One, Come All

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Come One, Come All

In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens wrote, "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." I am proud to report as your president that ACCC is enjoying the best of times. We recently completed our most successful spring annual meeting ever. The participation of nearly 500 attendees, coupled with 150 new members and/or first-time meeting attendees, helped make this meeting the largest we have had. A good meeting, however, is measured by far more than numbers of registrants. The content is what counts, and we had a great agenda. Day one began with a series of small informal roundtable discussions about such diverse topics as how to administer a cancer program, common problems with clinical research, and tips for efficient office practice. The afternoon featured a stellar panel discussion about quality in health care and how to measure it. Day two included a primer on federal legislation and how to lobby your representatives in Congress. Day three included a visit from leaders of the National Cancer Institute, a symposium on the ethics of managed care, and a series of presentations discussing alternatives to the physician practice management company delivery system model. The meeting concluded with a presentation of three models of vertically integrated care, including both the for-profit and the nonprofit environments.

Clearly, the content of this ACCC meeting demonstrates that this organization stands as the national leader in promoting quality cancer care. We are experiencing the best of times because never have we been at the center of so many crucial oncology advocacy issues. This year we are supporting two very important national legislative proposals. The first is the Rockefeller-Mack Bill (S. 381), known as The Medicare Cancer Clinical Trial Coverage Act. ACCC is strongly supporting this most important bill, which, when passed, will be the first formal public acknowledgement of the importance and relevancy of cancer clinical

research. We will finally be secure in knowing that future progress in cancer treatment will be protected and insured.

The second key national legislative issue we are promoting is the enhancement of the Kassebaum-Kennedy law, also known as The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. If amended, the law would provide, in addition to guaranteed health insurance, a provision that states that all health insurance, regardless of type, will guarantee access to all appropriate cancer medications.

Not only is the Association active at the national legislative level, but it is moving forward in many other important areas as well. ACCC is collaborating with the Oncology Nursing Society to establish a guide for cancer patients and their families. The Association is exploring a joint project with the U.S. Pharmacopeia to broaden the distribution of information on new cancer drug indications. We have worked with state oncology societies to develop clear, concise, usable cancer treatment guidelines. These vital initiatives will make a positive difference for your hospitals, practices, and most importantly, your patients.

As the new president of ACCC, I invite you to join us in our work. This organization accomplishes its multiple goals and projects, not through a rarified leadership elite, but through team effort. Everyone has the chance to pitch in and make a contribution. Help us by volunteering your ideas and energy. The Association is really for all of us, and it truly is the best vehicle we have to promote better cancer care in the community. Come join us on the journey.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James L. Wade III".

—James L. Wade III