

# Empowering Patients, Engaging Providers

BY JENNIE R. CREWS, MD, MMM, FACP



**A**s I begin my tenure as ACCC President, I would first like to thank outgoing ACCC president, Steven L. D'Amato, BSPharm, BCOP. He has set the bar high for all ACCC

presidents to come. My sincerest appreciation goes out to the ACCC Delegate Representatives for entrusting this position to me. I am honored to serve this organization.

I am also grateful to all of my predecessors for their leadership and their contributions to the Association of Community Cancer Centers. They have left a wonderful, evolving legacy of presidential themes: from our first look at the concept of the Oncology Medical Home; to providing the right care at the right time; to the importance of the multidisciplinary oncology team; to defining quality in oncology care; and, finally, revisiting the oncology medical home as it relates to integrated healthcare delivery models. I hope to add to this dynamic legacy with a presidential theme that focuses on patient-centered care:

*Empowering Patients, Engaging Providers.*


There will be many opportunities to explore this theme over the coming months. While we all think we understand and provide patient-centered care, in our changing healthcare environment we are being challenged to examine how we define patient-centered care—both today and tomorrow. How do we continue to provide patient-centered care as we transition to new models of cancer care delivery? How will the changing role of the patient in consumer-driven healthcare influence what we think of as patient-centered care?

In our day-to-day work, so many of the challenges we face are based in our struggle to deliver patient-centered care:

- The effort to ensure access to care—especially for patients in rural and underserved areas and for those with

limited resources strained by the accelerating cost of cancer care.

- The growth of personalized medicine with expanded use of genomic analysis and molecular testing and the consequent concerns of how to use this data and how to pay for it.
- The imperative to meet accreditation requirements, such as survivorship care, and—most important—ensure that this care is relevant and valuable to our patients.
- The need to incorporate shared decision-making tools into busy programs to help patients clarify the value of outcomes, understand the financial impact of cancer treatment, and define their end-of-life wishes.
- The enhanced use of patient-reported outcomes in cancer treatment and symptom management.
- The implementation of new technologies to share data or provide telemedicine, including smart phone apps and patient portals that give patients new options in how they receive care but which will require new forms of reimbursement.

To meet all of these challenges we must first involve and empower our patients, engaging all of the multidisciplinary providers on the oncology care team with these efforts. I look forward to working with the ACCC membership this year to explore creative and practical solutions to these challenges that we all face as we strive to keep the patient at the center of everything. 

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