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FROM THE EDITOR.....

ACCC and the Biden Cancer Initiative

BY JENNIE R. CREWS, MD, MMM, FACP



On Sept. 21, the Biden Cancer Initiative Summit convened in Washington, D.C., and was joined by 450 community summits across the country to bring together those who

work to improve the cancer experience for patients and caregivers. The Summit reinforced “the urgency of now,” a phrase coined by former Vice President Joe Biden, and builds on the Cancer Moonshot’s original aim: to make a decade of progress in five years toward ending cancer. The day featured inspirational talks from cancer survivors, updates from prominent researchers, and presentation of the FIERCE Awards, which celebrate those making an impact in the areas of prevention, navigation, survivorship, and disparities.

The Summit also held working sessions to identify new focus areas for the Biden Cancer Initiative within clinical trials, navigation, survivorship, disparities, prevention, and more. Session outcomes included strategies to:

- Lower out-of-pocket costs for cancer treatment
- Increase HPV vaccination rates
- Demonstrate the return on investment for navigation services
- Improve patient access to their clinical and genomic data
- Meet the psychosocial, physical, and financial needs of survivors
- Promote education for early signs of hard-to-treat cancers
- Enhance patient awareness of clinical trial design and eligibility.

More than 55 new commitments were made by individuals and organizations to achieve these goals.

It’s not a surprise that these strategies and goals align seamlessly with many ACCC initiatives. For example, ACCC has long recognized the financial burden that cancer brings to patients, families, and cancer programs, and continues to develop resources to help mitigate these economic pressures, including an annual Reimbursement &

Patient Assistance Guide (acc-cancer.org/PatientAssistanceGuide) and the Financial Advocacy Boot Camp (acc-cancer.org/FANBootCamp). On the topic of HPV vaccination and its importance in reducing the incidence of certain types of cancer, ACCC awarded a 2016 ACCC Innovator Award to The Outer Banks Hospital for its partnership with North Carolina county health departments and school district leaders to develop a multifaceted educational campaign disseminated to primary care providers and parents of adolescents. Read more about this innovative outreach effort at acc-cancer.org/HPVHearne. Programs seeking to grow their navigation services or improve the psychosocial and physical care delivered to patients need look no further than the pages of this journal for articles like “Building a Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program” (acc-cancer.org/RehabBauer) and “Building a Navigation and Psychosocial Support Program from the Ground Up” (acc-cancer.org/NavMcNulty).

It’s also not surprising that throughout the day, Summit speakers recognized the importance of community oncology in achieving Biden Cancer Initiative goals. ACCC’s work in clinical trials and navigation was acknowledged during the event, and Dr. Jill Biden specifically recognized ACCC Secretary Krista Nelson, MSW, LCSW, OSW-C, BCD, during her opening remarks. Krista Nelson and her colleagues at Providence Cancer Center received a 2015 ACCC Innovator Award for the Providence Family Program, which offers effective communication techniques, coping strategies, and support for families adjusting to their “new normal” after a cancer diagnosis (acc-cancer.org/FamilyProgramNelson).

ACCC partners with many organizations focused on the needs of cancer patients and the cancer care team. I am honored to represent ACCC on the Biden Cancer Initiative Advisory Committee, and many of our members are involved with Initiative-related projects. We have the opportunity to continue working with the Biden Cancer Initiative on several of the highlighted projects, and I will continue to promote the value that community oncology and ACCC bring to these efforts. Who better understands and is motivated by the “urgency of now” than those who care for cancer patients and families every day?