

AN ENDURING COMMITMENT

In recognition that psychosocial care is a critical component of comprehensive cancer care, ACCC has a long history of collaborating with key stakeholders to develop education in this field, including business case studies that support the hiring of [oncology psychologists](#) and [oncology social workers](#); virtual events like the joint AOSW-APOS-ACCC conference "Achieving Health Equity in the Psychosocial Treatment of Cancer Pain," and in-person meetings like the upcoming Delivery of Psychosocial Care in Oncology Summit.

Yet patients with cancer and their circles of support are not the only ones to benefit from psychosocial care. The burden of COVID-19—coupled with the emotional distress associated with caring for patients with cancer and helping patients and families make difficult treatment choices—has brought to light the urgent need to provide comprehensive psychosocial care to our healthcare workforce. Accordingly, ACCC is deeply committed to developing and sharing resources to support the mental well-being of *all* members of the cancer care team—clinical and non-clinical.

WHY WE ARE COMING TOGETHER

Emotional distress and mental health for patients and caregivers can greatly impact quality of life, treatment outcomes, and even the cost of care. While progress has been made with distress screening, finding effective and efficient practice solutions to address these needs can tax the care delivery system and contribute to staff stress and burnout. ACCC surveyed its membership in 2019 using the clinically validated Mini Z survey developed by the American Medical Association. The survey revealed elevated levels of burnout. To help its membership address this issue, on March 8, ACCC will host a multistakeholder summit focused on mental health in oncology to:

- Provide a forum for healthcare leaders, cancer care team members, and patient advocates to discuss the current state of mental health in oncology.
- Build a collaborative dialogue amongst all interested stakeholders to identify action plans that address ongoing mental health issues for patients, caregivers, and cancer care team members.
- Review and identify effective screening tools, training, resources, and policies to address psychological distress in patients, caregivers, and cancer care professionals.
- Identify barriers to providing and accessing timely and appropriate care for patients and caregivers experiencing psychological distress.

BEFORE WE GATHER TOGETHER

Prior to this summit, we ask that you review—and reflect—on the resources below. We have much to do and a limited time to do this important work in person. We look forward to an engaged and informed discussion.

[Addressing Distress Management Challenges: Recommendations from the Consensus Panel of the American Psychosocial Oncology Society and the Association of Oncology Social Work.](#) In this article, authors use the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research as an organizational structure to outline barriers and solutions to effective implementation of distress management screening across the cancer care continuum. Barriers and solutions are organized across five domains:

1. Individual characteristics (individual patient characteristics with a focus on groups who may face unique barriers to distress screening and linkage to services)
2. Intervention (unique aspects of distress management intervention, including specific challenges in screening and psychosocial intervention, with recommendations for resolving these challenges)
3. Processes for implementation of distress management (modality and timing of screening, the challenge of triage for urgent needs, and incorporation of patient-reported outcomes and quality measures)
4. Organization: Inner setting (the context of the clinic, hospital, or health care system).
5. Organization: Outer setting (including reimbursement strategies and healthcare policy).

Cancer and Mental Health New Research to Elevate a Conversation. Informed by research commissioned by BeiGene and conducted by the Cancer Support Community, this report seeks to better understand the mental health concerns of patients with cancer and any gaps they face in seeking emotional support. The survey findings and recommendations support the provision of mental health care as a critical component of quality cancer care.



[VIDEO] CLL Patient Terry Evans on Cancer and Mental Health. In this patient experience video, Terry shares how the lack of mental health resources, including a referral to a social worker, left him feeling isolated and alone—with no one to talk to about his cancer—until he went online and managed to connect with a cancer support group. “For the first seven years of my cancer journey, I knew no other patient with CLL.”

Community-Based Psychological First Aid for Oncology Professionals. This article finds that training in community-based psychological first aid is a promising intervention that promotes adaptive functioning by instilling individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to support oneself and others when stressful events occur. The Avera Cancer Institute, Sioux Falls, S.D., has conducted community-based psychological first aid for its workforce since August 2017. In a 2022 follow-up article, **A Psychological First Aid Program in the COVID-19 Era**, Avera Cancer Institute adapted this training to help foster a culture of resilience and mutual support during a global pandemic.

Integrating Social Care into the Delivery of Health Care. This 2019 The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Consensus report includes numerous recommendations to ensure that the U.S. healthcare systems addresses the multifactorial contributors to health, including social determinants of health. The study recognizes that social workers are “specialists” in identifying and addressing social needs like stable housing, economic security, access to nutritious food, and transportation. In its **Spring 2020 Practice Perspectives**, the National Association of Social Workers outlined key study findings and their implications for practice and policy.

Optimal Resources for Cancer Care (2020 Standards) was republished in November 2021; updates reflected in this version went into effect on January 1, 2022.

ACCC’S CONTINUING COMMITMENT: A CALL TO ACTION

This summit is the start of our journey together. ACCC will take what is discussed at this summit and share existing tools and resources, identify where additional education may be needed, and then partner with key stakeholders to meet those needs. ACCC will disseminate this information to the ACCC membership and the broader oncology community across multiple platforms, including blogs on ACCC Buzz; podcasts and vodcasts on CANCER BUZZ; and the Association’s peer-reviewed journal, Oncology Issues. You can help by sharing this information with your professional network, identifying existing tools and resources so that we are not reinventing the wheel, and connecting ACCC with organizations and individuals who can contribute to this important discussion.

This summit is conducted in partnership with:



Advancing the science and practice of psychosocial oncology.

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