



2008-2013

WORKFORCE STRATEGIC PLAN

To ENSURE CONTINUING ACCESS TO QUALITY CANCER CARE

Goal 1 – Oncology Care Delivery

ASCO will promote the transformation of oncology care to ensure an environment in which quality cancer care can be accessed by and provided to cancer patients, including those in active treatment, those facing end-of-life, and those who are survivors.

Goal 2 – Training Pipeline for New Oncologists

ASCO will work with fellowship programs to support training the next generation of oncologists to practice in a time of shortage, as well as address structural issues to increase the number of oncologists who are trained.

Goal 3 – ASCO's Workforce Infrastructure

ASCO will establish volunteer, staff, and data collection and reporting mechanisms to implement this strategic plan, evaluate the effectiveness of ASCO workforce initiatives, and track the status of the oncologist workforce.

Conclusions from the Workforce Study:

1. The demographics of the oncologist workforce are changing significantly with more than half of practicing oncologists nearing retirement. Younger oncologists increasingly desire flexible work options in support of greater work-life balance.
 2. The pipeline for new oncologists is severely constrained by the limited interest in Internal Medicine training, competition among Internal Medicine subspecialties for the pool of residents, and very limited plans to increase oncology fellowship slots.
 3. The oncologist workforce shortage coupled with shortages in other health professions presents a challenge to the entire oncology care team.
 4. The challenge of the workforce shortage requires a multi-faceted approach because no single effort will come close to addressing the significant imbalance between expected demand and projected capacity to deliver oncology care.
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Goal 1 – Oncology Care Delivery

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Objectives:

1. Provide competitive grants to identify and study innovative practice arrangements for alternate work options (e.g., part-time or shared practice, focused clinical work, evening and weekend clinics, etc.).
2. Conduct pilot projects to test innovative practice models focusing on particular topics (e.g., oncologist and non-physician practitioner collaborative practice, survivorship care, efficiency of care, access to oncology care in under-served areas).
3. Examine issues facing physicians who want to reenter the workforce after a period of time out of clinical practice and those who are considering delayed retirement.
4. Engage in partnerships with health professionals from other disciplines (including other oncology subspecialties) to develop models to provide ongoing care for cancer survivors that optimize integrated survivorship care.

Goal 2 – Training Pipeline for New Oncologists

ASCO will work with fellowship programs to support training the next generation of oncologists to practice in a time of shortage, as well as address structural issues to increase the number of oncologists who are trained.

Objectives:

1. Partner with other medical professional societies to address overall workforce shortage in Internal Medicine, and other specialties as appropriate.
2. Assess current number of and funding for training slots and develop recommendations for expansion of slots and funding mechanisms where appropriate.
3. Provide supportive information and tools highlighting workforce shortages to program directors who are seeking funds for program expansion.
4. Create more direct linkages between private practice and fellowship training.
5. Increase exposure to outpatient oncology throughout the continuum of physician education and post-graduate training.
6. Conduct demonstration projects with fellowship programs to enhance training in topics that will help oncologists practice in a time of shortage (e.g., efficiency, leadership, business management, collaborative practice).
7. Conduct demonstration projects to build partnerships between oncologist and nurse practitioner and physician assistant training programs to promote collaborative care model.

Goal 3 – ASCO’s Workforce Infrastructure

ASCO will establish volunteer, staff, and data collection and reporting mechanisms to implement this strategic plan, evaluate the effectiveness of ASCO workforce initiatives, and track the status of the oncologist workforce.

Objectives:

1. Create Workforce Advisory Group to ensure focused attention and ongoing commitment to workforce issues, advise the Board, implement initiatives (or provide support to ASCO Committees with jurisdiction), conduct outreach to other professional societies, analyze workforce data, and guide ASCO work in this area.
2. Implement workforce information database to conduct ongoing data collection and measure oncologist workforce against benchmarks predicted from 2007 workforce study.
3. Develop and issue health of the workforce report to the ASCO membership and public.