ASCO Announces 2019-20 Health Policy Leadership Development Program Fellows

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Alexandria, Va. – The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) today announced the Health Policy Leadership Development Program Fellows for the 2019-2020 class. Wendy Allen-Rhoades, MD, of Baylor College of Medicine, and Laura LaNiel Tenner, MD, MPH, of The Mays Cancer Center, home to UT Health San Antonio MD Anderson Cancer Center, will spend the next year developing leadership skills and healthcare policy expertise. During their fellowship, Dr. Allen-Rhoades and Dr. Tenner will participate in ASCO efforts to shape cancer-related policies that directly affect individuals with cancer and the oncology practice environment.

ASCO's Health Policy Leadership Development Program (previously the ASCO Health Policy Fellowship) launched in 2016 to build policy and leadership expertise among the Society's members and volunteers. Fellows receive practical experience working with ASCO Policy and Advocacy staff and policy counsel in crafting policy positions and statements; training in communication, leadership, and advocacy; and a mentored project that advances an ASCO policy initiative. Fellows will also be full members of the ASCO Leadership Development Program.

“As oncologists, we are uniquely qualified to share the complexities and realities of cancer care delivery with policymakers and offer solutions to improve care for our patients,” said ASCO President Monica M. Bertagnolli, MD, FACS, FASCO. “I'm delighted that Dr. Tenner and Dr. Allen-Rhoades will be joining us as health policy fellows and hope that this opportunity will allow them to sharpen their advocacy skills and learn the ins and outs of working on...
Dr. Laura LaNiels Tenner

Dr. Tenner is a medical oncologist specializing in gastrointestinal malignancies and assistant professor at The Mays Center. Her clinical focus is gastrointestinal cancers, predominantly liver, gastric, and colorectal cancers. She also has specialized training in ethics in oncology and population sciences research, with a specific focus in health care systems and cancer care improvement.

Dr. Tenner obtained her medical degree at Texas A&M College of Medicine and completed her fellowship in medical oncology at Indiana University. She spent much of her early career studying health care systems and policy, not just in the United States, but also in Canada and England. She obtained a Master of Public Health with a focus in policy. She now directs two pharmacy and therapeutics committees for two major health systems in San Antonio, Texas, and is extensively involved in the work at her cancer center on disparities in care and health systems barriers.

“The populations research we continue to do at the cancer center allows us to identify areas of system breakdown and disparities,” said Dr. Tenner. “Through ASCO’s Health Policy Leadership Development Program, I look forward to developing the skills I need to start to develop solutions to these deficiencies and become a more effective advocate for changes to the system.”

Dr. Wendy Allen-Rhoades

Dr. Allen-Rhoades is a pediatric oncologist, researcher, and Medical Director of the Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology and Soft Tissue Sarcoma Programs at Baylor College of Medicine. Her clinical research interest includes investigating ways to improve outcomes for adolescent and young adult oncology patients and her translational research efforts focus on investigating the role of microRNAs in osteosarcoma including using microRNAs as biomarkers and studying the functional roles of microRNAs in tumor and metastases development. She completed her fellowship training in pediatric hematology and oncology at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Cancer Center.
“My journey into health advocacy started as a clinical fellow, where I learned to advocate for my individual patients. I eventually started speaking to broader audiences about the need for increased funding for cancer research, and pediatric cancer research in particular,” said Dr. Allen-Rhoades. “As physicians, I believe it is our responsibility to educate not only our patients and colleagues, but also the general public. Through education and awareness, we can influence change.”

The Health Policy Leadership Development Program is open to all ASCO members who have completed their final subspecialty training between 2010 and 2015. The application period for the 2020-2021 program will open on July 1, 2019.

This program is supported by the Mission Endowment of Conquer Cancer®, the ASCO Foundation.

About ASCO:

Founded in 1964, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, Inc. (ASCO®) is committed to making a world of difference in cancer care. As the world's leading organization of its kind, ASCO represents nearly 45,000 oncology professionals who care for people living with cancer. Through research, education, and promotion of the highest-quality patient care, ASCO works to conquer cancer and create a world where cancer is prevented or cured, and every survivor is healthy. ASCO is supported by its affiliate organization, the Conquer Cancer Foundation. Learn more at www.ASCO.org, explore patient education resources at www.Cancer.Net, and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.