ASCO Issues New Template for Survivorship Care Plans

Healthcare Providers Should Give Patients Survivorship Care Plans at the End of Treatment
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Contact
Kirsten Goldberg
571-483-1548
kirsten.goldberg@asco.org

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) today issued a new template for healthcare professionals to use when providing a survivorship care plan to patients who have completed curative cancer therapy. The survivorship care plan contains important information about treatment the patient received, their need for future checkups and cancer tests, the potential long-term late effects of the treatment they received, and ideas for ways survivors can improve their health.

The new template, updating a previous version ASCO developed nearly a decade ago, was published in the Journal of Oncology Practice as part of an ASCO statement on the importance of—and minimum components for—survivorship care plans. The template is available online as part of ASCO’s Cancer Survivorship Compendium and was highlighted in an embargoed presscast for reporters this morning at 10:30 AM EDT. Because of its importance to cancer survivors, the template is also available on ASCO’s patient information website, Cancer.Net, and is included in the ASCO Answers Guide to Survivorship (PDF), ASCO’s newest resource for patients finishing active treatment.

“This cleaner, simpler form will help healthcare professionals get survivorship care plans into the hands of patients,” said Deborah K. Mayer, PhD, RN, chair of the ASCO Survivorship Care Plan Working Group and professor in the School of Nursing and Director of Cancer Survivorship at University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. "At the end of their treatment, patients should expect to receive a survivorship care plan, but if they don’t get one, they should ask their doctor or nurse for one."

ASCO believes that all cancer survivors benefit from a survivorship care plan to assist survivors and their primary care provider in coordination of care. Based on feedback from ASCO members,
the survivorship care plan template has been revised and streamlined. The new version focuses more on critical information, is easier for physicians and patients to use, and requires less time to complete.

The Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons has endorsed ASCO's recommendations for the minimum elements included in the new template. These elements were defined through a consensus process involving multi-disciplinary stakeholders including oncology providers, social workers, survivors, and primary care providers. The template was proven through an IRB-approved pilot test in 11 practices to be a time-saving and useful instrument.

In 2005, the Institute of Medicine recommended the use of survivorship care plans, but implementation has been limited in oncology practice due to several barriers, including the time consuming process of completing the template and lack of provider reimbursement for preparation time.

The statement, "American Society of Clinical Oncology Clinical Expert Statement on Cancer Survivorship Care Planning," was published today in the Journal of Oncology Practice.

The statement is available at http://www.asco.org/practice-research/cancer-survivorship, along with supplementary materials. Additional information about cancer survivorship for patients and caregivers is available at www.cancer.net/survivorship.

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About ASCO:

Founded in 1964, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is the world’s leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With more than 35,000 members, ASCO is committed to improving cancer care through scientific meetings, educational programs and peer-reviewed journals. ASCO is supported by its affiliate organization, the Conquer Cancer Foundation, which funds groundbreaking research and programs that make a tangible difference in the lives of people with cancer. For ASCO information and resources, visit asco.org. Patient-oriented cancer information is available at Cancer.Net.