Three-day meeting united the global oncology community to accelerate progress against cancer amid the COVID-19 pandemic

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ALEXANDRIA, VA – Today the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) announced record-breaking attendance at its three-day virtual scientific meeting, held online from Friday, May 29 through Sunday, May 31. More than 42,700 attendees from 138 countries have participated thus far, learning virtually about new clinical cancer advances in every area of cancer research.

Throughout the weekend, attendees viewed nearly 5,300 abstracts and more than 100 on-demand and broadcast sessions featuring more than 2,300 oral and poster presentations, opening and plenary sessions, cancer-specific highlights sessions, and clinical cancer symposia. Together, this content has been viewed more than 2.5 million times to date.

“While COVID-19 has made this a very challenging year, we remain united in our commitment to finding new cancer cures and improving the lives of the patients we serve,” Howard A. “Skip” Burris III, MD, FACP, FASCO, president of ASCO at the time of the Annual Meeting and now serves as the Society’s board chair. “Although the pandemic prevented us from gathering in Chicago, it didn't stop us from fulfilling our mission of sharing knowledge to accelerate progress for millions of people worldwide living with cancer. It was inspiring to see the
oncology community truly united and engaged to help our patients during this pandemic and beyond.”

Broadcast sessions over the weekend included clinical science symposia on the biggest trends in cancer research, cancer-specific highlights sessions featuring the highest-impact studies in each area, and a plenary session on the top five practice-changing studies. The line-up also featured a session on cancer care in the time of COVID-19 and an address by Dr. Burris on the theme of this year's meeting, “Unite and Conquer: Accelerating Progress Together.”

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ASCO completely reimagined and reinvented its 2020 Annual Meeting, the world’s largest cancer conference, originally scheduled to be held in-person in Chicago from May 29 through June 2. With the aim of still achieving an engaging and educational meeting experience for participants from around the world, ASCO volunteers began working in March to transform the meeting into an all-virtual event.

“We could not have conducted this virtual meeting without the hard work, creativity and dedication of our incredible group of staff and volunteers,” said Dr. Burris. “We are grateful for their unwavering commitment to helping us disseminate evidence-based information for the benefit of the entire oncology community and patients, even in the midst of a global pandemic.”

The virtual meeting drew participants from across the oncology community from around the world representing a wide range of disciplines, including:
- 40,000 oncology professionals
- Nearly 2,600 faculty and speakers
- Nearly 500 patient advocates
- More than 200 exhibiting health care companies
- More than 450 news media.

Through the virtual meeting platform, participants had the opportunity to network with their peers via a chat function or by scheduling a one-on-one video call.

Attendees also connected with one another through social media. Over the course of the weekend:
- The official meeting hashtag, #ASCO20, was used in more than 45,000 tweets from more
than 8,800 Twitter users
- There were more than three-quarters of a billion engagements on social media, including likes, shares, and comments.

“With half of attendees joining from outside the U.S., this was truly an international meeting of the minds,” said Dr. Burris. “It is exciting to think how many new connections were made and collaborations were sparked. The next big cancer breakthrough could very well come from one of the virtual conversations that began at this meeting.”

In addition, Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation, raised nearly $1 million for cancer research and its COVID Impacts Cancer Fund and granted more than $8 million to cancer research during the meeting.

The meeting sessions will be available for on-demand viewing through the virtual meeting platform until November 30, 2020. ASCO will hold the educational portion of its Annual Meeting virtually from Saturday, August 8 through Monday, August 10.

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.