JAMA Study Reinforces that Cancer Prevention and Treatment Must Be Tailored by Region

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On January 24, 2017, the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), published “Trends and Patterns of Disparities in Cancer Mortality Among US Counties, 1980-2014” by Modak et al. The study found that cancer deaths in the U.S. declined by 20 percent from 1980-2014, but there were large differences in cancer mortality as well as areas with unusually higher mortality rates across counties. The following is a statement from Daniel F. Hayes, MD, FACP, FASCO, President of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

“These findings demonstrate that although we are making significant progress in our understanding and treatment of cancer, we still have much to do. A reduction in cancer deaths by one-fifth is a testament to how cancer treatment has advanced over the last three decades. Imagine what could be done with more resources for cancer research and equally distributed cancer care?

“We need to continue to advocate for increased federal funding for cancer research. Just as importantly, your chances of surviving cancer should not depend on where you live. Severe disparities still exist even on a county-by-county basis. As oncologists, we continually strive to personalize care for the individual patient, but this study reinforces the importance of tailoring our cancer prevention and treatment efforts to geographic areas as well. We urge Congress to ensure equal access to health care as it considers reform efforts to be certain every American can take advantage of the remarkable advances in cancer care.

“The study’s accompanying editorial highlights several regional programs underway to meet this need and there are big data efforts, such as ASCO’s CancerLinQ®, that can help locate disparities in care on more rapid basis. However, this study’s findings emphasize that work must be done.

“ASCO commends the authors for this very important study and remains committed to ensuring all individuals have access to the cancer prevention and treatment services they need.”
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 more than 40,000 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.