Special Report Provides Guidance to Oncology Practices on Resuming Cancer Care During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Alexandria, VA – Today, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) released the ASCO Special Report: A Guide to Cancer Care Delivery During the COVID-19 Pandemic, which provides detailed guidance to oncology practices on the immediate and short-term steps that could be taken to help protect the safety of patients and healthcare staff before resuming more routine care operations during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required oncology practices in nearly every community across the United States to make operational changes to protect the safety of patients and staff, adjust to resource shortages, and comply with national and state restrictions on elective procedures. Now that communities across the country are beginning to gradually ease pandemic-related restrictions, oncology practices are thinking about how they can safely restore patient access to diagnostics, treatments, and other critical cancer care services.

“As oncologists, we want nothing more than to provide the highest quality cancer care to each and every patient. The decision to dial-back operations during the pandemic has not been an easy one for any oncology practice or cancer care provider,” said ASCO President Howard A. “Skip” Burris III, MD, FACP, FASCO. “While the move to resume normal operations will be slow and steady, we hope this report gives oncology practices the guidance they need to determine when and how to return to a ‘new normal’ as the impact of the pandemic begins to...
The ASCO special report summarizes a wide range of policies and practices developed by cancer facilities, as well as guidance provided by government agencies and other medical societies, including:

- Best practices for triaging/screening patients before appointments to reduce infection risk
- Guidance for providing cancer care to patients who are COVID-19-positive or under investigation for COVID-19
- Considerations for communicating with staff and patients about new protocols to protect patient health and safety
- Suggested policies and protocols for limiting infection spread by healthcare personnel through screening, testing, modified sick leave and work-from-home policies, and other measures
- Guidance for establishing physical distancing policies in clinical, administrative, and non-patient care areas of cancer facilities

The ASCO Guide also addresses:

- Best practices for prioritizing, scheduling, and billing for telemedicine visits
- Resources to inform when and how to reestablish cancer screenings and other critical cancer care, including medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgery, and ancillary services

The report was developed by a group of ASCO expert volunteers who work in diverse practice settings, and is not intended to provide recommendations for care of individual patients. ASCO also encourages practices to consider internal cancer center and practice policies; state, medical board, and municipality regulations; and other pertinent guidance to determine if and how their practice can safely resume services.

A prelude to ASCO's “Road to Recovery” initiative, which was announced at ASCO's recent presscast on COVID-19 and Cancer Care, this ASCO special report focuses on immediate and short-term steps that individual practices should consider to improve the safety of clinical cancer care during this public health crisis. The ASCO Road to Recovery, expected to be released in the fall of 2020, will lay out long-term policy and practice changes necessary to fully recover and improve the resiliency of the cancer care delivery system in a post-COVID-19 landscape.

These two initiatives are part of ASCO's ongoing commitment to provide timely information and resources to the cancer community on the rapidly evolving COVID-19 crisis. ASCO's tools,
data, and information on COVID-19 are available at asco.org/asco-coronavirus-information.

Read the special report.

**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.