Ten Oncology Practices in Underserved Communities Receive Funding to Participate in Quality Improvement Programs

Participation Made Possible Through ASCO and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)
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ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Ten oncology practices from rural and urban centers in the U.S. that primarily treat underserved populations have received grant funding to participate in the American Society of Clinical Oncology’s (ASCO) Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI®) and Quality Training Program (QTP). ASCO announced today the recipients of the grants, which are supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

The three-year grants, “Improving the Delivery of Cancer Care in Medically Underserved Communities,” will be administered through Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation, and will fund each practice’s training and participation.

“We are grateful to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation for allowing us to support more practices in their quality improvement processes,” said ASCO President Howard A. “Skip” Burris III, MD, FACP, FASCO. “With the resources to evaluate the care they provide and to develop process improvement strategies and techniques, these practices can optimize the quality of care they offer to patients with cancer in their communities.”

The recipients of the Improving the Delivery of Cancer Care in Medically Underserved Communities grant are as follows:

- Adena Cancer Center – Chillicothe, Ohio
- Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute – Hartford, Connecticut
- Medical College of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- New York Presbyterian Hospital – Flushing, New York
- Parkland Health and Hospital System – Dallas, Texas
- Sidney Health Center Cancer Care – Sidney, Montana
- Sweetwater Regional Cancer Center – Rock Springs, Wyoming
“Every American should have access to high-quality cancer care,” said Stavros Niarchos Foundation Senior Program Officer Roula Siklas. “And giving professionals at the frontlines of cancer care access to tools that ensure the best treatment possible is an essential step in this direction. SNF is proud to support ASCO in this effort.”

Beginning in January, each practice will participate in ASCO’s six-month QTP course, which is comprised of three in-person sessions that include seminars, case examples, and small-group exercises, as well as on-site work at the practices and virtual meetings with ASCO staff and improvement coaches. The QTP brings cancer care teams together to select, design, and implement a quality improvement project at their respective practices, and they work with support and guidance from experienced improvement coaches. More than 200 teams have completed the program to date.

Next, designated staff at each practice will receive training sessions on how to abstract chart data in QOPI® and then start doing so in the second half of 2020. QOPI® is ASCO’s quality assessment program, which has helped more than 1,000 practices to date conduct self-examination and identify specific areas for quality improvement. Participating practices can report on more than 145 evidence-based quality measures and receive individual performance scores by practice, site, and provider, as well as benchmarked scores aggregated from all participating practices. The data and results then can be used to inform future quality improvement projects and initiatives.

Finally, each practice will host a QTP one-day workshop for extended team members at their respective institutions—clinicians, administrators, leaders, pharmacists, and others—to help incorporate the principals of quality improvement and disseminate the knowledge they’ve gained on process improvement with other oncology care teams. These workshops introduce participants to tools and frameworks that are used in quality improvement and teach attendees to effectively lead or participate in improvement activities. The goal is to give oncology providers skills and a sense of empowerment to tackle quality improvement projects that will help reduce clinical variation and improve patient outcomes.

During the last months of the grant period, practices will continue their quality improvement and QOPI® reporting work with coaching from ASCO while they complete independent projects and participate in a learning collaborative.

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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.

About Conquer Cancer

Conquer Cancer®, the ASCO Foundation, funds research into every facet of cancer to benefit every patient, everywhere. In 1964, seven oncologists created the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO®), now a global network of nearly 45,000 cancer professionals. As ASCO’s foundation, Conquer Cancer helps turn science into a sigh of relief for patients around the world by supporting groundbreaking research and education across cancer's full continuum. For more information, visit CONQUER.ORG.