National Comprehensive Cancer Network Announces Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania as New Member Institution

NCCN announced that Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania (ACC) will become the organization's 28th Member Institution. This alliance of top academic cancer centers from across the United States is devoted to improving and facilitating quality, effective, efficient, and accessible cancer care so patients can live better lives.

The ACC's membership into NCCN will include the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP), Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, Pennsylvania Hospital, and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Clinicians and scientists from the ACC will join more than 1,300 experts from current NCCN Member Institutions to work together across 53 panels to review the latest innovations and approvals in cancer care, in order to update the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines). Those guidelines were downloaded more than 8 million times in 2017 alone and help to establish high-quality standards for care worldwide. There are currently 73 different NCCN Guidelines, which apply to 97% of cancers affecting patients in the United States, plus recommendations for related conditions like nausea, fatigue, distress, or immunotherapy-related toxicities.

"The Abramson Cancer Center is a perfect fit and wonderful addition to the group of leading cancer centers that comprise NCCN," said Robert W. Carlson, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. "Penn is one of the pioneers for immunotherapy and is also at the forefront for innovative treatment approaches involving stem cell transplantation, genetics, palliative care, pediatric cancer care, and other areas. Penn Medicine also shares NCCN's commitment to improving care for underserved populations in the United States and abroad. We look forward to working together to make sure people with cancer everywhere receive the very best evidence-based care possible."

NCCN was started by 13 founding Member Institutions in 1995, including Philadelphia-based Fox Chase Cancer Center, which also housed the nonprofit's original headquarters. Since then, the alliance has expanded significantly, both in membership and resources, which also include the Library of NCCN Compendia, NCCN Guidelines for Patients, NCCN Harmonized Guidelines for low- and middle-income countries, and numerous international adaptations and translations. Earlier this year, NCCN moved to new headquarters in Plymouth Meeting, PA, to accommodate its continuing growth.

"We are pleased and excited to welcome the Abramson Cancer Center as a member of NCCN," said Gary J. Weyhmuller, MBA, SPHR, Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, NCCN. "Our member institutions represent some of the best care available across the country. The addition of the Abramson Cancer Center serves to further strengthen our network."

"The Abramson Cancer Center is leading the charge of the immunorevolution, with research that has led to 4 new FDA-approved cancer drugs this year alone," said Robert Vonderheide, MD, DPhil, Director of the ACC. "We're energized to share our expertise with NCCN, as well as the chance to collaborate with other member institutions to ensure patients across the country are receiving the best possible care."

The ACC's expertise is especially highlighted by its role as global pioneers in new approaches to cancer treatment, particularly in personalized cellular therapies and proton beam radiation. Penn developed the first FDA-approved chimeric antigen receptor T-cell (CAR T) therapy, which has since been approved for a second indication and in multiple countries. The approach has successfully eradicated blood cancer in hundreds of patients around the world. Studies show it leads to overall remission rates of 80% among patients with acute lymphoblastic leukemia whose cancer could not be contained by the standard chemotherapies doctors have relied on for decades.

"Our experience bringing cancer treatment to patients all over the world has given us a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities involved, and our experts

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are looking forward to collaborating on these issues with fellow experts from other NCCN Member Institutions,” said Lawrence Shulman, MD, Deputy Director for Clinical Services at the ACC. Shulman also serves as chair of the American College of Surgeons’ Commission on Cancer.

NCCN will soon begin the process of incorporating experts from the ACC onto current and future NCCN Guidelines Panels. The NCCN Guidelines are the most frequently updated medical guidelines in any discipline and are available free-of-charge for noncommercial use at NCCN.org or via the Virtual Library of NCCN Guidelines app.

Precision Medicine Leader Syapse to Utilize NCCN Biomarkers Compendium for Clinical Care

NCCN announced a new agreement with Syapse, the leading precision medicine company, to expand the use of best practices in precision medicine when treating people with cancer. Syapse delivers solutions for scaling enterprise precision oncology programs. The data contained in the NCCN Biomarkers Compendium will strengthen Syapse’s decision support and workflow tools, increasing access to more personalized care.

“Treatment recommendations for people with cancer are expanding and improving rapidly, and that is particularly the case with precision medicine,” said Robert W. Carlson, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. “The experts who sit on the various NCCN Guidelines Panels are at the forefront of advances in using genes and gene products for diagnosis, screening, monitoring, surveillance, and other aspects of cancer care. The latest updates from our guidelines are included in the NCCN Biomarkers Compendium, which will now support the point-of-care decision-making tools from Syapse.”

The NCCN Biomarkers Compendium is part of NCCN’s Library of Compendia, which also includes databases for Drugs & Biologics (NCCN Compendium), as well as the NCCN Radiation Therapy Compendium, and the NCCN Imaging Appropriate Use Criteria (NCCN Imaging AUC). The NCCN Compendium is recognized by public and private insurers alike, including CMS and UnitedHealthcare, as an authoritative reference for oncology coverage policy. The recommendations contained in the Library of NCCN Compendia are extracted directly from the relevant NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines) and are updated on a continuous basis.

“To bring precision medicine to more patients in more places, it is essential for organizations across the healthcare industry to work together,” said Ken Tarkoff, CEO of Syapse. “The NCCN Biomarkers Compendium is universally recognized as the expert resource for genetic testing in patients. We are eager to support our health system oncologists by integrating NCCN’s latest guidelines into the Syapse platform.”

The NCCN-supported data will begin appearing on the Syapse platform in late 2018. Syapse is committed to updating that content weekly to keep pace with the NCCN Guidelines.

“Harnessing technology to share the latest evidence- and expert consensus-based information on biomarkers allows clinicians to make well-informed decisions more efficiently,” said Dr. Carlson. “That means they’ll have more time for the patients who need them.”

Elsevier to Integrate the NCCN Guidelines Into Via Oncology

Elsevier, the information analytics business specializing in science and health, will integrate the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines) and utilize the NCCN Chemotherapy Order Templates (NCCN Templates) as a reference into

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Via Oncology's Via Portal to provide clinical decision support at point of care and NCCN Guidelines concordance reporting. The NCCN Guidelines will also be used as a reference resource for developing and maintaining the Via Pathways.

Beginning in 2019, the Via Portal will be enhanced to include drugs and biologics recommendations from the NCCN Guidelines for use when providers are going off pathway. The Via Portal will ultimately include 34 NCCN Guidelines support for all Via Pathways diseases for medical oncology.

"NCCN is pleased to collaborate with Elsevier and Via Oncology to enhance the Via Pathways with the NCCN Guidelines," said Robert W. Carlson, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. "In supporting this agreement, both NCCN and Elsevier recognize the value of having evidence-based NCCN Guidelines recommendations at the point of care facilitated through technology to achieve the best outcomes for patients with cancer."

The NCCN Guidelines are the recognized standard for clinical and policy decisions in cancer care and are the most thorough and most frequently updated clinical practice guidelines available in any area of medicine. Derived directly from the NCCN Guidelines, the NCCN Templates include chemotherapy and immunotherapy regimens with literature support, supportive care agents, monitoring parameters, and safety instructions. The goal of the NCCN Templates is to enhance patient safety by empowering healthcare providers to standardize patient care, reduce medical errors, and anticipate and manage adverse events.

"We are pleased to be working with NCCN to strengthen our product for oncologists and patients with cancer," said Dr. John Danaher, President of Clinical Solutions, Elsevier. "When oncologists decide to divert from the generally accepted pathway because of their patient's unique need, the Via Portal will provide additional decision support for assuring that the care plan matches up with the NCCN Guidelines, and can be measured and tracked."

Via Oncology helps cancer centers demonstrate the value of their care to patients, referring physicians, and payers by developing and implementing clinical pathways in collaboration with its network of more than 2,000 US cancer care providers. Via Oncology's Via Pathways includes evidence-based proprietary content developed by committees composed of leading oncologists that forms the basis of clinical algorithms covering 95% of cancer types treated in the United States.

The Via Pathways are deployed to physicians and their staff at the point of care through the Via Portal, a patient-specific decision support tool that is integrated with the electronic medical record and provides seamless measurement of adherence. Via Pathways addresses more than 2,000 unique patient presentations, including expert-defined clinical algorithms and specific recommendations for all significant aspects of cancer care.

New Guidelines From NCCN Help People With Mouth Cancers Understand Treatment Options

NCCN has published the first of 3 guidelines for patients with head and neck cancers, focused on oral cavity (mouth and lip) cancers. The guidebook offers treatment explanations based on the recommendations from the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines) used by clinicians, put into plain language with accompanying glossary and background. This free online resource is also available in print through Amazon.com for a nominal fee. The publication was made possible thanks to funding through the NCCN Foundation, and sponsorship from the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance (HNCA) and Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer (SPOHNC).

"These guidelines will help to decrease the anxieties associated with a cancer diagnosis," explained Mary Ann Caputo, Executive Director, SPOHNC. "You will learn and empower yourself with the necessary knowledge of the disease and its treatment."

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These tools will enable one to go forward with a strong conviction of moving on and living a full life.”

“When I was first diagnosed, I was surprised, overwhelmed, and scared. I was completely focused on the treatment for my cancer, and so initially I was less aware of all the information shared with me during my medical appointments about my particular diagnosis,” said Jason Mendelsohn, HNCA Board Member and survivor. “These guidelines are a great resource that patients, their caregivers, and families can read when they’re ready and able to focus on everything they need to know. We believe they will be a great resource for head and neck cancer patients everywhere.”

Ellie Maghami, MD, Chief and Professor, Division of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery, City of Hope National Medical Center, and Member, NCCN Guidelines Panel for Head and Neck Cancers says Mendelsohn’s experience is one she’s seen again and again. She emphasized that although smoking and other tobacco use is by far the most common cause of mouth cancer, it can happen to anybody.

“It’s not just an old person’s disease or just a smoker’s disease,” said Dr. Maghami. “For instance, incidences of tongue cancer — which is a type of oral cancer — are on the rise in nonsmoking young people.” She also explained that HPV, despite its common link to throat cancer, is actually responsible for fewer than 5% of tongue cancer occurrences.

The NCCN Guidelines for Patients explain that there are several different types of cancers that can originate in all different parts of the mouth. They are generally treated first by surgery, including immediate reconstruction as needed and followed by rehabilitation of speech and swallow functions. It can be beneficial to receive treatment at a high-volume cancer center with highly experienced specialists who frequently treat these rarer types of cancers. The NCCN Guidelines also recommend enrollment in clinical trials whenever possible, and advocate for asking questions and seeking second opinions.

As with most cancers, early detection can make a huge difference. According to Dr. Maghami, these cancers are often caught early, thanks to the high visibility of the mouth location.

“It’s relatively easy to do a self-exam for oral cavity cancers. If you see something in your mouth that looks abnormal or feels strange for more than a few days, talk to a doctor about it.”

NCCN Guidelines for Patients currently cover disease types that account for approximately 90% of all cancer diagnoses. Patient guidelines for both Non-Invasive and Metastatic Breast Cancer have been recently updated, along with those for Colon and Prostate Cancer. The next 2 books in the Head and Neck series will cover oropharynx and nasopharynx cancers. The NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Thyroid Cancer already exists as a separate publication. All patient guidelines are available for free online at NCCN.org/patients or by app.

“Patients need reliable, accurate, up-to-date information presented in an easy to understand fashion,” said Dr. Maghami. “And that’s exactly what NCCN provides.”

NCCN Guidelines for Patients and NCCN Quick Guide sheets DO NOT replace the expertise and clinical judgment of the clinician.

To help support these tools, visit NCCNFoundation.org/donate or text “GIVE” to 856-FOR-NCCN (856-367-6226).