NCCN to Host 13th Annual Congress: Hematologic Malignancies September 2018 in NYC

World-renowned experts in the management of hematologic malignancies will present the latest treatment advances, updates to the standard of care as recommended in the NCCN Guidelines, and unique and challenging patient cases at the NCCN 13th Annual Congress: Hematologic Malignancies on Friday, September 21, and Saturday, September 22, 2018, at the New York Marriott Marquis in New York, New York.

Moderated by Ranjana H. Advani, MD, Stanford Cancer Institute, and Andrew D. Zelenetz, MD, PhD, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, this 1.5-day program will feature presentations and panel discussions on patient cases highlighting treatment options and supportive care for a variety of hematological malignancies including leukemias, lymphomas, myeloproliferative neoplasms, and plasma cell neoplasms. Friday opens with a keynote session on CAR T-cell therapy, followed by a discussion of novel agents in acute myeloid leukemia.

A preconference program, the NCCN Nursing Forum: Advancing Oncology Nursing in Hematologic Malignancies will take place on Friday, September 21. This program provides hematology/oncology nurses with comprehensive information for optimizing patient care in the management of patients. The program agenda includes the following topics: Optimizing the Care of Patients Receiving CAR T-Cell Therapy, Management of Toxicities Associated with Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors, Strategies to Identify Needs and Coordinate Referrals to a Multidisciplinary Chronic Graft-Versus-Host Clinic, and Transition of Care: Homebound Stem Cell Transplantation. Nurses who attend the Nursing Forum in full from 2:00–5:15 PM on Friday, September 21, 2018, may attend the NCCN 13th Annual Congress: Hematologic Malignancies with no additional registration cost. For the full congress agenda, visit NCCN.org/hem.

The NCCN 13th Annual Congress: Hematologic Malignancies is designed to meet the needs of hematologists, oncologists, nurses, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals who manage patients with hematologic malignancies. This program has been approved for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit and ABIM and ABMS MOC points for physicians and will award contact hours for nurses, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals.

NCCN Convenes Summit on Providing High-Quality Cancer Care in an Evolving Policy and Tech Landscape

NCCN's Oncology Policy Program hosted a summit focused on pragmatic approaches for providing the highest quality cancer care possible in the face of changing laws and technology. The program, "Policy Strategies for the 'New Normal' in Healthcare to Ensure Access to High-Quality Cancer Care," took place at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, and included diverse perspectives from clinicians, lawmakers, patient advocates, and others. FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, MD, provided the opening keynote address. Congressmen Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA) and Ted Poe (R-TX), co-chairs of the Congressional Cancer Survivors Caucus, offered their perspectives as lawmakers.

"Our hope is that everyone comes away from this summit with a fuller understanding of some of the complex issues involved in delivering the best cancer care possible to the largest number of people," said Robert W. Carlson, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. "At NCCN, we create opportunities for speakers with varying viewpoints to have a face-to-face conversation about patient access to high-quality cancer care. By including speakers with diverse perspectives, we can explore how policy and practice need to evolve in order to provide everyone with access to safe, effective cancer care."

One key topic of conversation throughout the summit was the role patients and caregivers have in determining their own most valuable path and how best to equip

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them for it. “Empowered, knowledgeable patients and families are our best defense against shoddy cancer care,” said Joseph Alvarnas, MD, City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center. “We have a responsibility to educate patients and families who are in search of high-quality care regarding what constitutes true quality in relation to their cancer journey.”

Survivor, health advocate, and consultant Stefanie Joho agreed. “Physicians and patients need to be partners—effective communication between them is key,” she said. Ms. Joho also pointed out that people with cancer aren’t the only ones in need of education, particularly when confronted with new treatment methods. “Cutting edge therapies require the constant advancement of continuing education for oncologists.”

Stephanie Farnia, MPH, the American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation, offered some of their “lessons learned” on provider perspectives from the launch of CAR T-cell therapy, namely, “The Medicare inpatient reimbursement system, in its current form, is not setup well to deal with these leaps in technology and associated high price points. New treatments that launch without a complete reimbursement and coding plan will face a lag in uptake by providers. Therefore, companies need to understand—and work to remedy—the financial pressure the high price of innovations can put on providers.”

Speakers and panelists throughout the summit also emphasized the importance of clinical trial participation. “Recent advances in cancer care have been driven by the identification of targetable mutations, harnessing the immune system’s ability to fight cancer, and improved symptom management,” explained Pavan Reddy, MD, Kansas Society of Clinical Oncology, Cancer Center of Kansas. “These advances were fueled by drug development and testing through clinical trials. It is essential to encourage patient participation in these trials, in order to deliver high quality and personalized cancer care while continuing to advance the science.” Ms. Joho agreed, stating “Clinical trials must be destigmatized.”

“Innovations in the oncology space have been accelerating in recent years,” said NCCN’s Director of Policy, Alyssa Schatz, MSW. “It’s exciting, but it also requires constant adaptation.” Ms. Schatz explained that the past decade has also seen numerous changes to healthcare policy and payment models, from the shifting of authority away from the federal government toward individual states, as well as the move from fee-for-service payment models toward value-based models of care.

During the summit, NCCN debuted results from a survey of NCI-Designated Cancer Centers regarding their experience with exchange marketplace coverage plans, conducted from December 2017 through January 2018 by Avalere Health. Out of the 29 responding centers across 21 states plus Washington, DC, 25 were only in network for some, not all of the ACA exchange plans available in their state; 2 more were excluded from all of their state’s exchanges. The percentage of centers that were excluded despite attempting to be in network increased slightly from 2017 to 2018.

“This tells us that we have to be concerned with consumer education efforts in order to make sure people who purchase plans on an exchange fully understand any limitations when they sign up,” said Ms. Schatz. “If people opt for lower premiums, they need to be made aware if that could restrict where they’re eligible to be treated or lead to higher out-of-pocket costs in the future.”

The panel discussions were moderated by Clifford Goodman, PhD, The Lewin Group, and also included input from Joseph Antos, PhD, American Enterprise Institute; Jennifer Carlson, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center; John Cox, DO, Parkland Health and Hospital System, UT Southwestern; Elizabeth Franklin, LGSW, ACSW, Cancer Support Community; Anna Griffin, Kite, A Gilead Company; Meghan Gutierrez, Lymphoma Research Foundation; Caron A. Jacobson, MD, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Brigham and Women’s Hospital; Ron Kline, MD, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI); Kavita Patel, MD, Brookings Institute; and Michael Ybarra, MD, PhRMA.

NCCN’s next policy summit, “Policy Challenges and Opportunities to Address Changing Paradigms in Cancer Care Delivery,” will take place on September 13, at the National Press Club. Then on December 10, the organization will host a Patient Advocacy

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Summit to address “Advocating for Equity in Cancer Care.” Visit [NCCN.org/policy](https://www.nccn.org/policy) for more information, and join the conversation online with the hashtag #NCCNPolicy.

NCCN Seeking Poster Presentations from Top Oncology Researchers

NCCN is now accepting abstracts for consideration to be presented during the NCCN 2019 Annual Conference: Improving the Quality, Effectiveness, & Efficiency of Cancer Care General Poster Session at the Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Florida on Thursday, March 21, and Friday, March 22, 2019. NCCN welcomes original abstracts from investigators in the general oncology community. Submissions will be accepted from academic institutions, teaching and community hospitals, or industry. Both NCCN and non-NCCN institutions may participate.

Research may fall into the general areas below:

- Clinical oncology (all phases)
- Pre-Clinical Oncology
- Epidemiology/Risks
- Correlative/Genomic
- Best practices in implementation and Use of clinical practice guidelines
- Quality improvement
- Outcomes and health services research
- BIOinformatics/Information technology sciences

The NCCN General Poster Session, including submission review, is overseen by the NCCN Oncology Research Program (ORP). The submission deadline for the NCCN General Poster Session Call for Abstracts is Wednesday, November 7, 2018, at 11:59 PM ET. Corresponding authors can expect to receive notification via email in mid-December 2018.

To learn more about the NCCN Annual Conference, please visit [NCCN.org/conference](https://www.nccn.org/conference).