The NCCN 2020 Virtual Annual Conference

Robert W. Carlson, MD

The NCCN 2020 Annual Conference—originally scheduled for March 19 through 22—was one of the first major oncology meetings to be impacted by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Ordinarily, NCCN would have welcomed some 1,500 participants, including oncologists, fellows, nurses, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals, to Orlando, Florida, for an opportunity to learn from multidisciplinary experts and share perspectives with others.

Although gathering in person was not possible this year, NCCN recognizes the importance of continuing optimal care and advancing new knowledge in oncology despite the COVID-19 pandemic. To facilitate this, NCCN is delivering the emerging findings and trends in cancer treatment via the NCCN 2020 Virtual Annual Conference (available at [NCCN.org/conference](https://www.nccn.org/conference)). This special issue of *JNCCN* presents these Highlights as a synopsis of the virtual proceedings.

Numerous innovations in cancer care have emerged over the past year, as reflected in continuous updates made to the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines). The webinars synopsized here provide essential new information on how to achieve the best outcomes for patients, and they also provide a deeper understanding of the strong evidence that supports recommendations found in the NCCN Guidelines. The breadth of topics presented reflect the impact NCCN and the NCCN Guidelines have on the management of people with cancer and support of their caregivers.

Within the Virtual Conference, faculty from across the now 30 leading academic cancer centers that comprise NCCN presented the latest best practices in the treatment of patients with cancer and explained NCCN Guidelines updates for various malignancies. Topics in these Highlights include new and emerging therapies, keys to optimization and implementation of treatment, and best practices in delivery of care across the cancer continuum. Some sessions tackle issues where there are differing perspectives, including a panel on controversies in the management of hereditary cancers and a debate on optimal first-line therapy for chronic lymphocytic leukemia. Other sessions highlight updated evidence-based expert consensus for many cancer types (including breast, colon, lung, pancreatic, and many more).

This Highlights issue also includes a selection of the abstracts from the NCCN General Poster Session, with studies focused on clinical oncology, preclinical oncology, epidemiology/risks, correlative/genetics, best practices in implementation and use of clinical practice guidelines, quality improvement, outcomes and health services research, and bioinformatics/information technology sciences. All accepted abstracts are available at [JNCCN.org](https://www.jnccn.org), and this year online access to the posters is available at [NCCN.org](https://www.nccn.org).

Additional Conference Activities

The in-person NCCN Annual Conference would normally include varied other programs, and NCCN is offering some of them online as well. For example, the NCCN 2020 Nursing Program: Advancing Oncology Nursing is now a live-to-recorded webinar series that began on May 7. It includes supportive care topics like managing immunotherapy-related toxicities, molecular testing updates, and oral chemotherapy compliance. The full list of already-recorded webinars plus registration for upcoming live offerings can be found at education.nccn.org/nursing2020.

ROBERT W. CARLSON, MD

Robert W. Carlson, MD, joined NCCN as CEO in January 2013 following an esteemed history of leadership positions within the organization, including Representative to the NCCN Board of Directors, Chair of the Breast Cancer Guidelines Panel, and Member and Founding Chair of the Breast Cancer Risk Reduction Guidelines Panel. Prior to this appointment, he served as Professor of Medicine in the Division of Oncology and Stanford Medical Informatics at Stanford University Medical Center, as well as Medical Director of Inpatient Oncology and Hematology at Stanford Cancer Institute. Dr. Carlson is a graduate of Stanford University Medical School, and he completed his internship and junior residency in internal medicine at Barnes Hospital Group before returning to Stanford University to complete his senior residency. Dr. Carlson is board certified in Medical Oncology and Internal Medicine and is a member of several medical societies. He lectures extensively and has authored or co-authored more than 140 articles, abstracts, and book chapters. From 2001 through 2012, Dr. Carlson was selected by America's Top Doctors; from 1994 through 2011, he was selected by Best Doctors in America; in 2008, he was presented with the National Physician of the Year Award for Clinical Excellence by Castle Connolly Medical, Ltd.; and in 2010, Dr. Carlson was given the Founding Collaborator Award by the Breast Health Global Initiative (BHGI).

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The ideas and viewpoints expressed in this commentary are those of the author and do not necessarily represent any policy, position, or program of NCCN.

Recorded sessions for the Fellows Program (of value to all oncology specialists at any level of experience) are also available via the NCCN Continuing Education portal, as is a live-to-recorded satellite session on multiple myeloma.

The conference website also includes a virtual exhibit hall, patient advocacy pavilion, reimbursement resource room, and health information technology listings.

In normal years, we share continuing education sessions both in-person and via enduring webinars, in order to provide everyone with the opportunity to learn using the method that's best for them. We look forward to the future when it is

safe to resume in-person meetings, since many people enjoy the face-to-face interaction with thought leaders, networking, and camaraderie that the NCCN Annual Conference normally provides. However, we are glad to have been able to pivot as seamlessly as possible to online-only offerings under the current circumstances, to keep the oncology community as safe and healthy as possible, and to do our part to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visit NCCN.org/conference to learn more about the NCCN 2020 Virtual Annual Conference, and join the conversation online with the hashtag #NCCN2020.

Annual March 18 - 20
Conference
NCCN.org/conference2021

General Poster Session

**Call for
Abstracts**

Deadline: 11.11.20