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## NCCN Annual Conference Sessions Now Free Online

NCCN recently announced a series of free, continuing medical education webinars providing updates on the latest research and expert insights for managing cancer. 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. Now, NCCN is delivering emerging findings and trends in cancer treatment online via the NCCN 2020 Virtual Annual Conference at [NCCN.org/conference](https://www.nccn.org/conference).

“We won't allow COVID-19 to stand in the way of progress for people with cancer,” said Robert W. Carlson, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. “Numerous innovations in cancer care have emerged over the past year, as reflected in continuous updates we've made to the NCCN Guidelines. These webinars 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.”

In addition to newly posted continuing education (CE) webinars, NCCN is providing online access to a (non-CE) poster session overseen by the NCCN Oncology Research Program (ORP). 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,” explained Dr. Carlson. “We look forward to the future when it's safe to resume large, in-person meetings, since many people enjoy the face-to-face interaction with thought leaders, networking, and camaraderie that conferences provide. However, we are glad to have been able to pivot as seamlessly as possible to online-only offerings under the current circumstances.”

The full list of recorded webinars for the NCCN 2020 Virtual Annual Conference can be found at [education.nccn.org/ac2020](https://www.nccn.org/education/ac2020). Topics 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 cancer risk assessment and 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 all major cancer types (including breast, colon, lung, pancreatic, and many more).

The NCCN 2020 Nursing Program: Advancing Oncology Nursing is now a live-to-recorded webinar series which began on May 7, and 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](https://www.nccn.org/education/nursing2020).

Recorded sessions for Fellows are available via the NCCN Continuing Education portal, as is a live-to-recorded satellite session on Multiple Myeloma.

Visit [NCCN.org/conference](https://www.nccn.org/conference) to learn more about the NCCN 2020 Virtual Annual Conference, and join the conversation online with the hashtag #NCCN2020.

## New Information From NCCN on Overcoming Challenges for People With Head and Neck Cancers

NCCN has recently published a third book to complete the NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Head and Neck Cancers series. Each book contains detailed, expert guidance on what to expect and management options for various cancers that impact the mouth and throat. The information is based on the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines), but is presented in easy-to-read language and format—with charts, images, and a glossary of medical terms—in order to empower patients and caregivers to make shared decisions on the care plan that's right for them. An independent study recently found NCCN Guidelines for Patients to be among the most trustworthy options for cancer patients seeking information online, and they can be a useful tool through the continuum of care.

This series of patient and caregiver resources is available for free online through funding received by the NCCN Foundation, generously supported by the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance (HNCA), Oral Cancer Foundation, and Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancers (SPOHNC). The content has also been endorsed by the Thyroid, Head and Neck Cancer (THANC) Foundation and the Thyroid Care Collaborative.

"When I was first diagnosed with stage IV tongue cancer, I was in shock," said Tom Bennett, Survivor and HNCA Ambassador. "I thought, 'Why me? How can I have cancer?' For people who are newly diagnosed, there is so much to process emotionally, in addition to the steep learning curve about the disease itself. These guidelines will help patients and caregivers understand more about treatment options in a plain and straightforward way, which is important during a stressful time."

"I wish someone had handed me a publication like this the day my husband received his diagnosis," said Linda Clyne, spouse, caregiver, and SPOHNC facilitator. "This one resource could have saved me many sleepless nights and internet searches that yielded too much unfiltered information and too little encouragement. Patients and their families will appreciate the wealth of information it provides, intelligently-presented with precision, clarity and a minimum of medical jargon."

NCCN has a single clinical version of the guidelines for healthcare providers covering all head and neck cancers (aside from thyroid cancer, which is covered separately). However, the patient version was divided into 3 books: 1 on Oral Cancers (mouth and lips), 1 on Nasopharynx Cancers (the passage between the nasal cavity and the soft palate), and the newly-published book on Oropharynx Cancers (generally considered the back of the throat, including the tongue base, tonsils, soft palate, and pharyngeal wall). All are available in digital form for free at [NCCN.org/patients](https://www.nccn.org/patients) and via the NCCN Patient Guides for Cancer App for mobile and tablet. Printed versions are available at Amazon.com for a nominal fee.

Sharon Spencer, MD, Professor and Chief of Medical Services in the University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Radiation Oncology and Vice-Chair of the NCCN Guidelines Panel for Head and Neck Cancers, explained why trustworthy and comprehensive patient information is particularly crucial for these types of cancers.

"The head and neck area is incredibly important for speaking and eating, and it's the first thing people see and feel," said Dr. Spencer, also a Senior

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Scientist at the O’Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB. “When you disrupt a patient’s life with radiation, chemotherapy, or surgery to the head and neck, it’s especially challenging for them and their families. Their diet has to change, their salivary function may change, and many people experience a lot of fatigue and emotional distress. These guidelines can help them prepare and reinforce the information they get from their clinicians, better enabling caregivers to serve as coaches and motivators throughout the entire process.”

Dr. Spencer stated that the cure rates are improving, but patients need a multidisciplinary team with a lot of supportive care in order to manage any difficulties that arise during treatment. She also pointed out some available preventive steps such as widespread vaccination against HPV—particularly among adolescents—and avoiding tobacco products, which are associated with the 2 main types of oropharyngeal cancer. Although there are better overall survival rates for HPV-positive oropharyngeal cancer, vaccination at a younger age is an effective way to prevent it from occurring in the first place. Nasopharyngeal cancers, which are associated with the Epstein-Barr virus but not HPV, are much less common in the United States than oropharyngeal cancers. For both types, patients typically present with large neck nodes, and are treated primarily with surgery or chemotherapy and radiation. Advances in robotic techniques for minimally invasive surgery have contributed to the improving cure rate, while maximizing preservation of function.

The NCCN Guidelines for Patients address disease types accounting for approximately 94% of all cancer diagnoses in the United States across 44 books, including breast, colon, pancreatic, prostate, and many more. They are updated and expanded on a regular basis in collaboration with more than 100 patient advocacy organizations. Visit [NCCN.org/patients](https://www.nccn.org/patients) to learn more or make a donation to the NCCN Foundation to support these and other essential resources for people with cancer.

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## NCCN Foundation Awards Leading Young Investigators Advancing Cancer Research for Adults and Children

NCCN and the NCCN Foundation today announced 5 new recipients for the 10th annual NCCN Foundation Young Investigator Awards (YIA) Program. The honorees will receive up to \$150,000 in funding to study ways to improve care and help find cures for people with breast, colorectal, pancreatic, and small cell lung cancer, as well as pediatric acute myeloid leukemia. The NCCN Oncology Research Program (ORP) managed the selection process and will oversee the projects, which will each extend for the next 2 years.

“NCCN Foundation Young Investigator Award recipients go on to make incredible contributions to the global oncology community,” said Robert W. Carlson, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. “These men and women are among the best of the best up-and-coming cancer researchers, and NCCN is proud to provide a step up on their career journey. Each of these studies represents a critical learning opportunity that can help us save lives and lessen hardships for people with cancer.”

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The 2020 NCCN Foundation YIA recipients are:

- Agnieszka Czechowicz, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Stanford University School of Medicine
  - ▶ “Development of anti-hKIT Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-Cells as a Dual Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation (HSCT) Conditioning and Immunotherapeutic Agent for Cure of Pediatric Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML)”
- Wade T. Iams, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center
  - ▶ “Quantifying Minimal Residual Disease in Patients with Small Cell Lung Cancer”
- Shivan Mehta, MD, MBA, MSHP, Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
  - ▶ “Choice Architecture and Mailed Colorectal Cancer Screening Outreach in a Community Health Setting”
- Mustafa Raouf, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor, City of Hope Beckman Research Institute
  - ▶ “Targeting Transcription-Replication Conflicts in KRAS-driven Pancreatic Cancer”
- Jennifer Y. Sheng, MD, Assistant Professor in Oncology, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
  - ▶ “An Adaptive Nutrition and Exercise Weight Loss (A-NEW) Study for Breast Cancer Survivors”

“The NCCN Foundation is proud to honor these talented researchers as they explore the course of treatment innovation and advancement for people with cancer,” said Marcie R. Reeder, MPH, Executive Director, NCCN Foundation. “We look forward to seeing where their research takes them on the path toward future breakthroughs.”

Following precedence, research results from these 5 recipients will be presented during the NCCN 2022 Annual Conference. Similar presentations from the recipients of the 2019 NCCN Young Investigator Awards were scheduled for the NCCN 2020 Annual Conference, which was postponed due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. However, posters that were accepted for the conference can now be viewed online at [NCCN.org/conference](https://www.nccn.org/conference), with abstracts printed in *JNCCN*.

The NCCN ORP fosters innovation and knowledge discovery that improves the lives of people with cancer and supports preclinical, translational, and clinical research and quality improvement projects in oncology at NCCN Member Institutions. In an effort to improve collaboration in cancer research, the NCCN ORP also maintains a shared resources website and an informed consent database. For more information on these and other collaborative cancer research projects, see [NCCN.org/orp](https://www.nccn.org/orp).

The 2020 NCCN Foundation Young Investigator Awards were made possible through support from AbbVie Inc; AstraZeneca; Genentech, a member of the Roche Group; Incyte Corporation; Pfizer Inc.; and Pharmacyclics, An AbbVie Company. Visit [NCCN.org/patients](https://www.nccn.org/patients) to learn more about the NCCN Foundation or make a donation to support future research and patient resources.