US Oncology®

Advancing Cancer Care in America

Integrated Cancer Care: Providing Access to Quality Cancer Care in the Community

Integrated Cancer Care provides comprehensive, quality care – allowing patients to receive chemotherapy and radiation therapy at the same site with the same team of dedicated cancer specialists (physicians, nurses, technicians, etc.) – in a convenient community setting that is close to home, friends and family. Today, more than 84 percent of the nation's cancer patients receive their treatment in community-based cancer centers.

Advantages of integrated cancer care include:

Clinically integrated cancer care improves quality of care and continuity of care. For these reasons, it has become the standard of care that patients have come to expect and rely on throughout the United States. More so than ever before, medical and radiation oncology are inextricably linked in the treatment of cancer and numerous studies have demonstrated that the combination of chemotherapy and radiation therapy improves survival rates.

- **Fragmentation of cancer care increases costs and adds greater burden to the patient.** Forcing a cancer patient to travel to multiple locations for care results in duplicative and unnecessary services, additional co-pays, and treatment in a more expensive setting. Integrated care also avoids the complications in care that can arise through conflicting appointments, multiple location visits, and the loss of patient records.

- **Integrated cancer care is essential for patient access to clinical trials that can often represent the best hope for effective treatment.** Hospitals and stand-alone radiation oncologists very rarely participate in radiation clinical trials because their involvement requires the dedicated infrastructure found in integrated community-based cancer practices. This includes research trained personnel, standard operating procedures and extensive data management systems.

- **If patients are forced to seek radiation therapy at a separate site from their chemotherapy infusion center a comprehensive treatment regimen becomes difficult if not impossible to establish**. Increased traveling time for a patient undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy can be physically debilitating, and studies indicate that patients will often go without recommended treatment if burdensome travel is required. Furthermore, many breakthrough cancer treatments call for chemotherapy and radiation therapy to be administered within a very precise window of time – making treatment at one site all the more essential.

- **Integrated care allows medical and radiation oncologists to confer about diagnoses face-to-face in real time.** This ability greatly enhances medical and radiation oncologists' ability to collaborate on complex diagnoses and treatments through the use of shared clinical teams, evidence-based standards of treatment, imaging equipment, electronic health records, and pharmacies.