

Community Oncology Alliance Launches Oncology Fellows Task Force

Oncology Fellows Task Force Will Guide COA's Efforts to Educate Future Workforce on Practicing in the Community Setting

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, May 17, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ --

The Community Oncology Alliance (COA) announced today the creation of an Oncology Fellows Task Force to help guide the organization's efforts to engage oncology and hematology fellows, update them on policy issues that impact cancer care, and educate them about the value of community oncology.

The COA Oncology Fellows Task Force will support the work of the [COA Fellows Initiative](#) as it develops educational programs and engages with oncology and hematology fellows

considering the next step in their career. Launched in 2017, the COA Fellows Initiative is designed to explore all practice setting options, including research, academia, government agency, hospital, and community based. The initiative is constructed to present a fair and balanced look, not only at the future of oncology and hematology, but also at choices for care delivery.

Experts predict a growing shortage of oncologists in the United States as a wave of retirements will take place in the coming years, with more oncologists leaving than entering the workforce. Research from ASCO estimates that approximately one in five practicing oncologists is nearing retirement age. The oncologist shortage is already acute in rural and underserved areas, with 32 million Americans living in a county with no oncologists. At the same time, with the aging population and growing number of survivors due to the increased efficacy of cancer treatment, there will be a significant increase in the need for oncology services.



Community Oncology Alliance Logo

Today, the majority of Americans receive their cancer treatment from an independent, community oncologist. As physicians complete their three-year oncology or hematology fellowship, they have a choice of how and where they will practice. The COA Fellows Initiative presents the community setting as a practice option and discusses the many factors to consider when making those decisions.

Since its start, the COA Fellows Initiative has worked with educational institutions and state oncology societies to speak about community oncology and developed a robust system of interactive educational modules to assist fellows during their residencies. Over the past five years, the Fellows Initiative has built a national network of fellows and program directors supporting each other through resource and information sharing.

The success and growth of the Fellows Initiative spurred the COA Board of Directors to create the COA Oncology Fellows Task Force. The 19 members of the task force will help guide the current Fellows Initiative, set strategic goals, and assist in the development of new educational materials. Additionally, they will help initiate the construction of fellows rotations in COA practices via outreach to program directors nationwide.

“Our current group of fellows are hungry for more: more educational content, more connections, and more information. The COA Oncology Fellows Task Force is a fantastic value add for a group of young physicians who want to be the best they can be for the communities they serve,” said Mary Kruczynski, COA’s Director of Development and Strategic Initiatives and COA staff liaison for the COA Fellows Initiative.

“The value of community oncology is obvious to our patients, staff, and the communities we serve, but it may not be readily apparent to fellows who are concentrating on their studies,” said COA’s President Kashyap Patel, MD. “The Oncology Fellows Task Force are ambassadors for our field and a key factor in bringing bright, young physicians to communities across the country.”

The current members of the Oncology Fellows Task Force are:

- Ted Arrowsmith, MD, Tennessee Oncology
- Miriam Atkins, MD, FACP, Augusta Oncology Associates
- Davey Daniel, MD, Tennessee Oncology
- Michael Diaz, MD, Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute
- Stephen (Fred) Divers, MD, Genesis Cancer Center
- David Eagle, MD, New York Cancer & Blood Specialists
- Bobby Green, MD, Thyme Care
- Dinesh Kapur, MD, ECHO Associates
- Mary Kruczynski, Community Oncology Alliance
- Marianna Lamb, MS, Medical Oncology Associates of Southern CA
- Ed Licitra, MD, PhD, Astera Cancer Care
- Joseph Lynch, MD, Geisinger Medical Center

- Barbara McAneny, MD, New Mexico Cancer Center
- Debra Patt, MD, PhD, MBA, Texas Oncology
- Stephen Schleicher, MD, MBA, Tennessee Oncology
- Frederick Schnell, MD, National Cancer Treatment Alliance; Cancer Center of Middle Georgia; Community Oncology Alliance
- Mark Thompson, MD, Zangmeister Center, Retired; Community Oncology Alliance
- Emily Touloukian, DO, Coastal Cancer Center
- Harsha Vyas, MD, FACP, Cancer Center of Middle Georgia

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About the Community Oncology Alliance: COA is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for community oncology practices and, most importantly, the patients they serve. COA is the only organization dedicated solely to community oncology where the majority of Americans with cancer are treated. The mission of COA is to ensure that patients with cancer receive quality, affordable, and accessible cancer care in their own communities. More than 5,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with cancer every day and deaths from the disease have been steadily declining due to earlier detection, diagnosis, and treatment. Learn more at www.CommunityOncology.org. Follow COA on Twitter at www.twitter.com/oncologyCOA or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CommunityOncologyAlliance.

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