

COA Announces Expanded Focus on Industry Relations, Oncology Fellows Program, and Health Disparities in Cancer Care

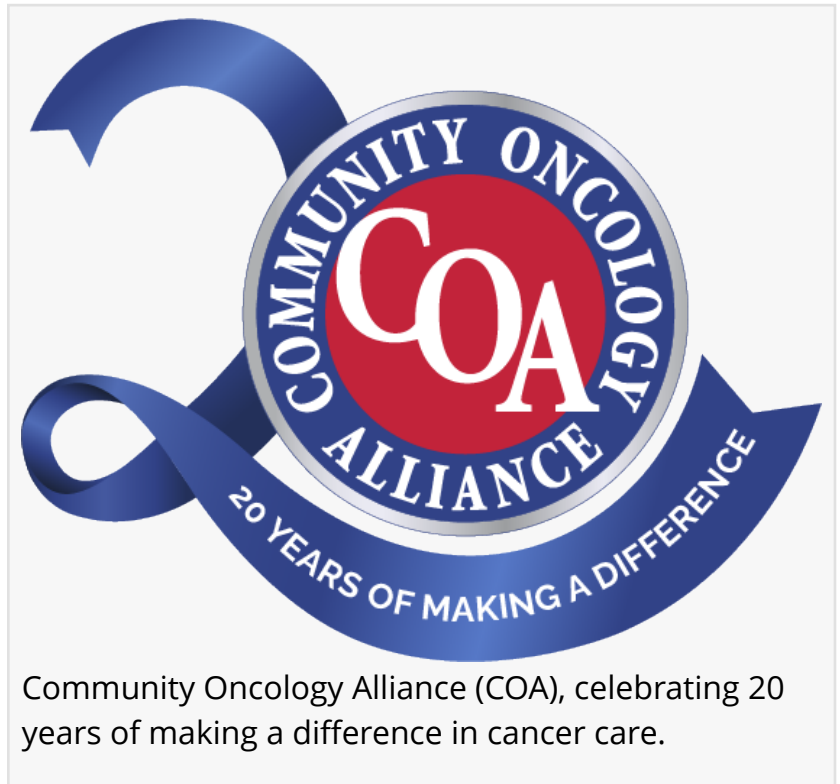
Doug Barefield Joins as New COA Director of Industry Relations

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, January 23, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Community Oncology Alliance (COA), a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for community oncology practices and the patients they serve, is pleased to announce that Doug Barefield has joined the COA team as Director of Industry Relations.

As part of COA's increased commitment to exposing oncology and hematology fellows to independent community practice and addressing health disparities in cancer care, Mary Kruczynski will now be focused on those issues as a priority in her position of Director of Development and Strategic Initiatives. Previously, Kruczynski's priority for more than 15 years has been overseeing COA's successful industry engagement.

In his new role with COA, Barefield will direct relations with representatives of pharmaceutical, biotechnology, genomic, and drug delivery and distribution companies, as well as other industry entities. By bringing together and working with all stakeholders in the cancer care ecosystem, COA seeks to address common issues that impact and hinder patient treatment and care delivery.

"In order to truly make an impact on the most daunting challenges faced by patients and practices, it is critical that COA regularly work with everyone in the cancer care system, including industry stakeholders," said Ted Okon, executive director of COA. "With his deep experience working especially with biopharmaceutical manufacturers, Doug Barefield brings a wealth of



Community Oncology Alliance (COA), celebrating 20 years of making a difference in cancer care.

knowledge that will help COA continue to meet our mission of supporting independent community oncology practices in delivering the highest quality, most affordable cancer care provided in caring clinics in patients' own communities. We are excited to have Doug join us."

Barefield comes to COA from AmerisourceBergen's community oncology group purchasing organization, ION. He was most recently director of corporate accounts, where he managed relationships with pharmaceutical and biotechnology manufacturers and contributed to GPO contracting, practice education, technology solutions, and business development.

Kruczynski will now focus on COA's increased commitment to [engage oncology and hematology fellows](#), update them on policy issues that impact cancer care and educate them about the value of independent community oncology. Since conceiving an initiative with fellows in 2017, Kruczynski has created a successful program working with academic institutions to educate physicians completing their three-year oncology/hematology fellowships and has developed a robust system of interactive educational modules to assist fellows during their residencies. This focus on the future workforce of community oncology practices is important as 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.

In addition to overseeing an expanded Fellows Program, Kruczynski will work on other COA strategic initiatives, starting with COA practices' programs to improve cancer health equity. Last year, COA announced the formation of a [standing Health Equity Committee](#) to address cancer and other health disparities through research and projects.

"COA is currently celebrating 20 years of advocating for patients and their community oncology medical teams to preserve access to the highest quality, most affordable cancer care close to home," said Miriam Atkins, MD, FACP a practicing oncologist at AO Multispecialty Clinic in Augusta, Georgia, and newly elected COA president.. "Adding Doug to the COA team is an exciting development as independent practices like mine are pressured more than ever by a consolidating health care system that places profits before patients. And Mary's work leading COA's engagement with oncology and hematology fellows over the last six years is one of the best-kept secrets of our organization. Having her primary focus on this reflects COA's strategic investment of resources in engaging the future oncology workforce that is critical to ensuring patients have access to cancer care in the community setting."

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About the Community Oncology Alliance: The Community Oncology Alliance (COA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for community oncology practices and, most importantly, the patients they serve. For more than 20 years, COA has been 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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