



ALLIANCE TO ADVANCE PATIENT-CENTERED CANCER CARE

An estimated 1.7 MILLION PEOPLE are newly diagnosed with cancer each year in the United States, and the number is projected to grow as the population ages.¹

Charting a New Course in Cancer Care

Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care

Despite advances in cancer diagnosis and treatment, access to high-quality cancer care continues to be challenging for some patients in the United States, especially those in vulnerable and underserved communities. The burden of cancer falls disproportionately on some segments of the U.S. population, including racial and ethnic minorities; low-income, uninsured and underinsured populations; and rural populations.

For people newly diagnosed with cancer, the health care system can be challenging and overwhelming. The delivery of cancer care is often fragmented and poorly coordinated, and patients often face barriers to receiving timely and patient-centered care.^{2,3}

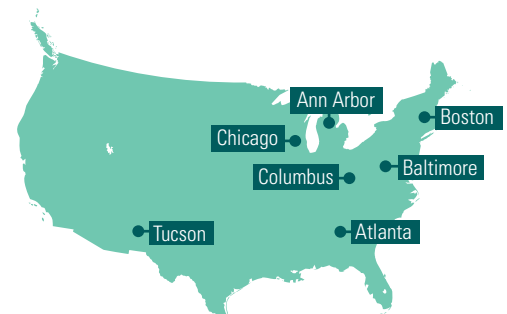
In a landmark 2013 publication, [Delivering High-Quality Cancer Care: Charting a New Course for a System in Crisis](#), the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued recommendations to improve the delivery of cancer care in the United States. The IOM called for strengthening patient-centered care and reducing disparities in care for vulnerable and underserved populations.

In response to this unmet need, the [Merck Foundation](#) (the Foundation) established the [Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care](#) (the Alliance) with a \$15 million commitment through 2021. The Alliance is a multi-site initiative that aims to increase timely access to patient-centered care and reduce disparities in cancer care for vulnerable and underserved populations in the United States.

The Alliance Program Partners

The program grantee organizations that comprise the Alliance are:

- [Georgia Cancer Center for Excellence at Grady Health System](#) (Atlanta, Ga.)
- The [Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine](#) (Baltimore, Md.)
- [Massachusetts General Hospital \(MGH\) Cancer Center](#) (Boston, Mass.)
- [Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine](#) (Chicago, Ill.)
- [Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) (Columbus, Ohio)
- The [University of Arizona Cancer Center](#) (Tucson, Ariz.)



In addition, the Foundation has selected the [University of Michigan School of Nursing](#) (Ann Arbor) to serve as the National Program Office (NPO) for the Alliance. The NPO will support the program efforts of the grantee organizations and provide leadership in building the Alliance as a national public-private partnership.

Patient-centered care: Providing care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs and values, and ensures that patient values guide all clinical decisions.⁴

The Goals of the Alliance

The Alliance is working with regional and community partners to develop and implement comprehensive patient-centered cancer care programs in the United States.

The Alliance aims to:

- **Promote evidence-based, multifaceted interventions** to improve the delivery of cancer care
- **Reduce disparities in access to high-quality cancer care** for vulnerable and underserved populations
- **Improve patient outcomes**, including satisfaction with care and quality of life
- **Build sustainable community partnerships** that advance patient-centered cancer care
- **Disseminate key findings and lessons learned** to promote best practices in patient-centered cancer care

The Alliance Approach *Intervention Strategies*

The Alliance programs will work to implement interventions in these areas critical to improving patient-centered care:

- Improve coordination of cancer care and integration with primary care and other specialty care
- Enhance patient and provider communication and patient engagement in care
- Empower patients to actively engage in their health care and treatment planning
- Offer psychosocial care and other supportive care for patients and their families

Advancing Best Practices in Patient-Centered Cancer Care

Through an independent cross-site evaluation, the Foundation will evaluate the impact of the Alliance and its programs. A key goal will be to disseminate the evaluation findings and lessons learned to promote best practices in patient-centered cancer care that can improve patient outcomes and reduce disparities in care.

References

1. American Cancer Society. (2016). Cancer Facts and Figures, 2016. <http://www.cancer.org/research/cancerfactsstatistics/cancerfactsfigures2016/>
2. American Society for Clinical Oncology. (2016). The State of Cancer Care in America, 2016. <http://www.asco.org/practice-research/state-cancer-care-america-2016>
3. Institute of Medicine. (2013). Delivering High-Quality Cancer Care: Charting a New Course for a System in Crisis. <http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/reports/2013/delivering-high-quality-cancer-care-charting-a-new-course-for-a-system-in-crisis.aspx>
4. Committee on Quality of Health Care in America. Institute of Medicine. Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001.