ASCO's Clinical Practice Committee

Oncology Tomorrowland (With Apologies to Walt Disney)

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MD

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In 1952, Walt Disney formed a company of artists, engineers, architects, designers, and other creative individuals. Walt Disney Imagineering was born, and it was charged with developing theme parks and managing Disney's assets. The term Imagineering had originally been coined by an artist in the late 1940s, combining imagination with engineering, but

given Walt Disney Imagineering's commercial success, this word has become strongly associated with the Disney brand.

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) returns to Orlando in 2009 for the Annual Meeting, and given the changes in cancer care delivery that have occurred and are looming on the horizon, perhaps a little imagineering would be welcome, making oncology's "Tomorrowland" one in which health care professionals can lead satisfying and rewarding careers, and cancer patients can continue to receive the high-quality care they need and deserve. Oncology Imagineers will come from the ranks of ASCO members and staff, oncology nurses and nonphysician providers, patient advocacy groups, third-party payors, government agencies such as Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, health care think tanks, policy makers, and politicians. The reality is that the health care landscape is changing. The current system is not sustainable. It is in everyone's best interest to become creative and to work together as collaborators rather than competitors.

As with my previous column, the reader might ask the rhetorical question: "What does any of this have to do with the Clinical Practice Committee (CPC)?" ASCO leadership, volunteers, and staff have made a huge collective effort to keep an eye on the future of oncology practice and, in many circumstances, are the Imagineers who will shape that future. The CPC is involved in many of these efforts.

The Workforce Advisory Group has done a masterful job during the past couple of years identifying a large problem that looms on the horizon for our society: patient demand will, in the not too distant future, exceed the ability of the projected oncology workforce to provide care. Oncology is not unique, and the ageing baby boomers will create challenges for many aspects of the health care delivery system,

not to mention the government agency assigned to pay for the costs of that care. The challenge for our Oncology Imagineers is to develop innovative ideas for cancer care delivery that will meet the needs of the cancer patient population of the future. The CPC has been well represented on the Workforce Advisory Group, and remains engaged in this discussion. We applaud the efforts of Michael Goldstein, MD, Dean Bajorin, MD, and others as they look to the future with an eye on the cancer care workforce.

The electronic health record (EHR) is a recognized reality of Oncology Tomorrowland. Of course, EHRs are features of today's oncology landscape, but many struggle with the limitations and frustrations associated with today's systems. The CPC is engaged with the Imagineers of the EHR Workgroup as they strive to identify the needs of the practices of tomorrow. The Workgroup has recently published *The Oncology EHR Field Guide: Selecting and Implementing an EHR*, which we believe will prove to be a useful tool for ASCO members. John Cox, DO, FACP, a past CPC chair, leads the EHR Workgroup's efforts to increase ASCO member adoption of EHRs as well as improve the quality and patient safety functions of the systems.

Quality has become the watchword of health care delivery, and it should be the goal of all providers to deliver the highest quality care possible. ASCO has taken a leadership role in setting the standards for quality cancer care. The Quality of Care Committee is the official home for ASCO's quality efforts, and CPC Chair-Elect Mike Neuss, MD, is the CPC liaison to this committee. The Quality Oncology Practice Initiative has grown and matured, and is evolving into a program that can serve as an endorsement of practices as "purveyors of quality care." CPC members represent ASCO to such organizations as the Cancer Quality Alliance and the National Quality Forum.

The CPC includes volunteers who serve on many other panels and task forces, and who represent us to other organizations within the larger universe of organized medicine, of which I have mentioned only a few. We need new ideas and new leaders to step up and face the challenges of Oncology Tomorrowland. I am confident that these Imagineers are present within our membership—they simply need motivation to become involved and participate in the dialog.

Finally, *Journal of Oncology Practice (JOP)* itself is looking to the future. With the departure of Douglas Blayney, MD,

Editor-in-Chief to become ASCO President-Elect, this year we have selected Dr Cox as the new Editor-in-Chief for the journal. We owe Dr Blayney a great deal, for under his leadership the journal has grown and matured. I am confident that a new group of Imagineers in the form of contributors and editors will lead *JOP* into the Tomorrowland that is the future of oncology practice, and continue to provide valuable resources for all of us as we strive to provide the best possible care for our patients.

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