Clinical Trials Participation Awards Recognize Community-Based Practices Dedicated to Research

The Clinical Trials Participation Awards (CTPAs) were designed to recognize and promote high-quality clinical research sites with the intention of increasing physician awareness of and participation in clinical trials. These awards are presented to community-based practices participating in clinical trials, which are vital to ensuring the continued advancement of cancer therapies.

“Clinical trials are the engine of progress in cancer prevention and treatment and the primary mechanism by which we develop personalized cancer therapies. The CTPA recipients have shown the dedication and committed the resources to develop high-quality clinical research programs in the community setting,” said ASCO President Richard Schilsky.

ASCO supports patient access to investigational and proven therapies offered in clinical research studies. For many patients with cancer, clinical trials provide the best means for accessing promising new therapies, and these awards are an effort to both reward practices and publicly recognize their efforts. Winners are determined to have initiated a quality community-based research program with high-quality audit reports and investigators in good standing.

Nominations for the CTPAs were made by the ASCO Clinical Practice Committee, the National Cancer Institute Community Clinical Oncology Program, and several National Cancer Institute Cooperative Groups. Nominations were also made by US Oncology (The Woodlands, TX), the Minnie Pearl Cancer Research Network (Nashville, TN), and the Hoosier Oncology Group (Indianapolis, IN), all of which are community-based oncology research networks. Each nominated practice was invited to formally submit an online application. The online application requested both quantitative and qualitative information, including a description of innovative techniques employed to increase overall accrual of patients and accrual of minority populations, methods for overcoming barriers to research, and methods used to ensure and maintain the quality of research. Applications then underwent peer review by a subcommittee of the ASCO Cancer Research Committee. The chair of the subcommittee was Robin Zon, MD. The other members included James Atkins, MD; Gary Cohen, MD; Andrea Denicoff, RN, MS, CANP; Charles McKay, MD, MBA; and Peter Yu, MD.

The 2009 CTPAs were presented to the following practices at the 2009 ASCO Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida:

- Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV
- Doctors Hospital of Laredo, Laredo, TX
- Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI
- Iowa Oncology Research Association Community Clinical Oncology Program, Des Moines, IA
- Nebraska Cancer Specialists, Omaha, NE
- University of Hawaii Cancer Research Center of Hawaii Minority-Based Community Clinical Oncology Program, Honolulu, HI
- Wilshire Oncology Medical Group, La Verne, CA
- North Star Lodge Cancer Center, Yakima, WA

Between now and the 2010 ASCO Annual Meeting, *Journal of Oncology Practice* will publish a series of articles focusing on the winning practices of CTPA recipients. These articles will feature interviews with members of these groups who will discuss their innovative techniques for conducting clinical research. Previous articles have presented discussions of how award-winning practices conduct outreach programs, address funding issues, identify the elements of an effective research team, minimize research delays, identify successful strategies to keep clinical trials moving forward, and select and identify clinical trials for their practice. An understanding of how these model sites conduct clinical research should be useful for other community-based practices that are striving to improve their clinical research programs.

The CTPAs were established in 2003 after a recommendation by the 2001 Clinical Trials Task Force to increase initiatives that enhanced physician awareness of and participation in clinical trials. This year, eight practices received CTPAs, contributing to the 71 total awards that have been distributed since their inception. The CTPAs are sponsored by the Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups.

The request for nominations for the 2010 CTPAs will be sent out in summer 2009. For additional information about the CTPAs, please e-mail CTPA@asco.org.

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