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Cancer Center

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"Nurses will be at the center of this care. They want and need education to give survivors the tools for a full life after cancer," said Marcia Grant, RN, DNSc, a professor and Director of the Division of Nursing Research and Education at City of Hope, who is co-principal investigator with Mary McCabe, RN, MN, Director of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Cancer Survivorship Program.

The program aims to empower nurses to identify survivors' needs and help patients and their families achieve the best possible quality of life after cancer and its treatment. The two-and-one-half-day annual training workshops, which will be held in Los Angeles and New York, are designed for nurses from all-cancer healthcare settings, including private practice offices, small community cancer clinics, and more-comprehensive NCI-designated cancer centers. Two hundred nurses will be competitively selected to receive the training, with each workshop limited to 50 participants.

"The way nurses implement survivorship will be different because their resources are different," said McCabe. "A larger center will have more of an infrastructure enabling nurses to follow patients in a data-based environment. But the average community oncologist doesn't have those resources, so communicating the treatment summary and plan of care will be critical to have nurses and doctors go over what they should do for follow-up care."

The workshops will focus on preventing new cancers through healthy lifestyles, determining when survivors should have tests like colonoscopies and mammograms, following up on potential short- and long-term side effects, and communicating with patients.

The curriculum will build upon investigators' extensive experience with interdisciplinary survivorship care at City of Hope and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

City of Hope provides survivorship programs for prostate, breast, and pediatric cancer patients. Memorial Sloan Kettering offers a comprehensive array of services for survivors. These include medical care - such as survivorship clinics, screening, dermatologic consultations, and genetic counseling - as well as psychosocial support, counseling, suggestions for healthy living, and more.

"Pediatric cancer patients are usually treated in cancer centers, but about 85 percent of adult patients are treated in the community," Grant said. Adds McCabe, "Kids have been followed up for years, but that has not happened with adults. Given the expanding number of cancer survivors, especially during the last decade, patients should know what they need to do for prevention, surveillance, and intervention."

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