



NCI Community Cancer Centers Program Pilot: 2007-2010

Questions and Answers

Key Points

- The NCI Community Cancer Centers Program (NCCCP) is a proposed national network of community cancer centers that will expand cancer research and deliver the latest, most advanced cancer care to a greater number of Americans in the communities where they live.
- The NCCCP is a three-year pilot program that will extend the reach of NCI research into more U.S. states, cities, and towns, including rural areas and inner cities, and will focus on 1) bringing more Americans into a system of high-quality cancer care, 2) increasing participation in clinical trials, and 3) reducing cancer healthcare disparities.
- NCI has selected 16 community hospitals in 14 states as NCCCP pilot sites. A successful pilot will lead to the nationwide launch of the NCCCP in 2010.
- For more information, visit Web site at <http://ncccp.cancer.gov>

Why is NCI conducting the NCI Community Cancer Centers Program pilot?

Evidence from a wide range of studies suggests that cancer patients diagnosed and treated in a setting of multi-specialty care and clinical research may live longer and have a better quality of life. The NCCCP pilot will offer more Americans access to research-based cancer care by affiliating with the hospitals and clinics where most cancer patients already receive care. The pilot will make it easier to receive high-quality cancer screening, prevention, treatment, and palliative care services. This is expected to improve treatment outcomes for more Americans.

Why is NCI expanding its services into the community?

NCI estimates that 85 percent of cancer patients in the United States are diagnosed at hospitals in or near the communities in which they live. The other 15 percent are diagnosed at NCI-designated Cancer Centers, a network of 63 academic research institutions located in largely urban areas across the country. Many patients are not treated at the major cancer centers because of the distance from their homes, or for other personal or economic reasons. The NCCCP pilot will extend NCI programs into local communities, giving patients easier access to clinical research and advanced care.

What are the goals of the NCCCP pilot?

- 1) *Expand clinical trials.* At the pilot sites, patients will have access to the very latest cancer prevention and treatment advances through NCI-sponsored clinical trials. Pilot sites will provide a local point of entry to draw more patients into clinical trials and enable researchers to more rapidly develop and evaluate effective prevention and treatment strategies.
- 2) *Reduce cancer healthcare disparities.* A major focus of the NCCCP is to help reduce the cancer burden among underserved populations. The NCCCP will actively reach out to these communities, bringing more Americans into the system of care and helping NCI to better understand and address the root causes of disparities in healthcare.
- 3) *Collect, store, and share blood and tissue samples needed for research.* With access to a broader cross-section of patients who voluntarily provide tissue and blood samples, researchers will have a greater opportunity to study both normal and cancerous cells. The pilot will assess how NCI's guidelines for collection and storage of specimens can be applied nationwide to benefit the entire cancer research community.
- 4) *Explore the utility of a national database of electronic medical records.* The pilot will assess the ability of sites to link medical information, provided with patient consent, to NCI's electronic patient data repository, Cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid™ (caBIG™). Expanding the amount of patient data available to cancer researchers will greatly contribute to our knowledge and treatment of cancer.

