



New Mexico Cancer Care Alliance Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary

February 18, 2012 was the **10th anniversary** of New Mexico Cancer Care Alliance offering cancer clinical trials to New Mexicans. It is through the continued hard work and dedication of everyone involved in the NMCCA network, that we continue to advance the global knowledge of cancer research through local participation in cancer clinical trials.

The NMCCA mission is to provide local access to innovative clinical trials for the prevention, screening, diagnosing and treatment of cancer through a statewide partnership. NMCCA will provide educational opportunities and raise awareness of the role clinical trials to allow patients to receive cancer care, *in their own communities*. Over the past 10 years, NMCCA has grown into a network of more than 90 physicians who work in private practice and in the major healthcare institutions in central, southern and northern New Mexico. The individual participants of the NMCCA network collaborate to find the most efficient and effective ways to bring the most promising cancer treatments available through cancer clinical trials to New Mexicans.

NMCCA is the result of a small group of dedicated cancer physicians in Albuquerque who were concerned by the fact that the newest experimental cancer treatments generally were only available through clinical trials conducted outside the state. They saw firsthand that the economic and emotional cost of travel kept New Mexico cancer patients from participating in these programs. These physicians and their institutions became the founding participants of NMCCA.

The Founding Institutional Participants are:

- Lovelace Health Systems and St Joseph Healthcare
- New Mexico Veterans Affairs Health Care Systems
- Presbyterian Healthcare Services
- University of New Mexico Cancer Research & Treatment Centers

The community physician practices that were Founding Participants are:

Private Practices:

- William Abbott, MD
- Susan Seedman, MD
- Linda Ann Smith, MD

Albuquerque Urologic Associates

Hematology Oncology Associates

New Mexico Colon & Rectal Surgery Associates

New Mexico Ear, Nose, Throat Specialist, P.C.

New Mexico Oncology Hematology Consultants

Radiation Oncology Associates

Southwest Gynecologic Oncology Associates

NMCCA's goals are to increase the quality of cancer care in New Mexico, bring new knowledge to the field of oncology by opening cancer clinical trials offered by government agencies, physician initiated, and pharmaceutical sponsors, make it easier for cancer patients to participate in a clinical trial, and ensure access for all New Mexicans to the best cancer therapies offered through clinical trials.

In 2003, NMCCA hired its first two staff members and opened its offices, began the Medical Scientific Review Committee meeting to review and open new trials, and enrolled 76 patients that year. Today NMCCA has 9 staff members and has enrolled nearly 3,000 patients since 2003.

Each year NMCCA recognizes and honors cancer patients who have participated on a cancer clinical trial through our HERO (Helping to Enhance Research in Oncology) Educational Program. This year promises to be better than ever with the additional celebration of our 10th year anniversary. On May 3, 2012 our 7th Annual HERO Recognition Program and 10th Anniversary Celebration was held at the National Hispanic Cultural Center.

Fact Sheet & Legislative Request

\$200,000 appropriation for the statewide expansion of a coordinated cancer clinical trials network

New Mexico Department of Health

Program Funding:

- Advocate for patients to receive the newest treatments offered through research in their communities, thus increasing their quality of care
- Develop a program of primary and secondary cancer prevention studies
- Provide education programs for both patients and physicians to raise awareness of the role, benefits and availability of cancer research studies
- Expand the statewide network of cancer care through clinical research studies (clinical trials)

Program Problem Statement:

Less than 5% of adults diagnosed with cancer each year will be treated through participation in cancer clinical trials as compared to 75 % of pediatric cancer patients. The pediatric overall 5-year survival rate is 80%. The progress in childhood cancer survival is largely attributable to improvements in treatments and the higher proportion of pediatric patients participating in clinical trials.

This request is to expand the clinical trials network beyond the Rio Grande corridor and to develop a primary and secondary cancer research prevention network throughout the state. There is an infrastructure in place through the New Mexico Cancer Care Alliance (NMCCA) network to provide therapeutic cancer trials in the Rio Grande corridor. The goal is to expand access to clinical trials beyond the Rio Grande corridor and to create a statewide network for comprehensive cancer prevention clinical trials. The NMCCA is a not-for-profit clinical research network created 10 years ago as a collaboration between the UNM Cancer Center (UNMCC), Presbyterian Healthcare Services, Lovelace Health Systems, the NM Veteran's Administration and more than 75 physicians to create an integrated infrastructure for patients to receive cancer screening, prevention and treatment trials. Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center in Santa Fe and Memorial Medical Center located in Las Cruces joined in 2005 and 2008 respectively. Today, over 90 physicians participate in the NMCCA. The creation of the NMCCA has greatly improved the synergistic relationship between the UNMCC and the state's community oncology providers. Thus, using the NMCCA as the bridge between the community and the UNMCC has significantly benefited access to clinical trials for cancer patients. Funding would be used to expand the efforts of NMCCA statewide.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in New Mexico (as in the United States), resulting in almost 3270 deaths per year in the state. The *New Mexico Cancer Plan 2007-2011* estimates 8,030 New Mexicans will receive a cancer diagnosis each year and that approximately 50,000 - 60,000 New Mexicans are living with cancer.

For some cancer patients, a clinical trial and access to new drugs and treatment may hold the most potential for them to defeat the disease, live a longer life or live a higher quality of life. In 2011, 517 patients were enrolled on New Mexico Cancer Care Alliance clinical trials and since its inception in 2002; NMCCA has helped over 3,000 patients participate in local research as part of their cancer treatment.

Program Details and Intent:

- Expanding the NMCCA will impact the reach of clinical trials for cancer patients throughout the state. This will allow more New Mexicans to participate in cancer prevention activities in their local community. NMCCA would continue to work with their hospital and physician participants and would expand their work with the Department of Health, rural hospitals and medical oncologist as well as federally funded health clinics. NMCCA would use its current infrastructure for expanded clinical trials access and would also be able to improve its infrastructure to provide prevention trials.
- The new infrastructure will have two components: the first will be for primary care givers and their population of patients at higher risk for cancer to participate in cancer therapeutic and prevention clinical trials; the second will be for continued expansion of education efforts with communities statewide designed to build the awareness and capacity for community participatory research.

**# of Enrollment on Clinical Trials
Opened Through NMCCA 2003-2012**

