Astellas US LLC Announces Collaboration with Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators

Navigation Acuity Tool to Be Developed by Astellas US LLC and AONN+

CRANBURY, N.J. (PRWEB) November 20, 2018 -- Astellas US LLC and the Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators (AONN+) announced today a new collaboration to develop, standardize, and validate an evidence-based, oncology navigation–specific Acuity Tool. When finalized, the tool will have the potential to determine the level of support cancer patients may need from their oncology team to help them better understand their disease, treatment options, and next steps, and to empower greater engagement in their care along their journey.

While acuity is commonly used in healthcare literature, the concept is frequently misunderstood or used incorrectly. “The term patient acuity refers to a description of patient attributes that can be used to stratify care needs and navigation requirements,” said AONN+’s Danelle Johnston, MSN, RN, ONN-CG, OCN, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Director of Strategic Planning and Initiatives. “Once you have an accurate way to quantify and prioritize patients’ needs, you can make predictions to aid in the allocation of resources.

Navigation programs can incorporate this information into an ‘acuity system’ to measure the effectiveness of navigation activities and to measure patient outcomes that are specifically related to navigation services.”

Navigators, ranging from nurses to social workers and other nonclinically trained individuals, have become an integral part of the multidisciplinary team guiding patients through their complex and burdensome personal cancer journey. A navigator’s ability to assess patient needs at every stage of care, match needs with appropriate services, and mitigate barriers to care, can be enhanced and supported by the development of an acuity tool. “Only when the needs of the patient can be quantified, can a practical method for allocating resources, measuring effectiveness, and determining outcomes be defined. As such, a navigation-specific tool that will reliably assign acuity to any given patient is of paramount need,” said Johnston. “We are thrilled to be collaborating with Astellas on this important project to fill a significant unmet need in the cancer community and identify a best practice for patient-centered care delivery.”

“By supporting navigators through the collaborative development of an oncology acuity tool, we aim to benefit patients and the broader healthcare ecosystem,” said Doug Noland, Head of Patient Experience, Executive Director, Astellas US. “In the landscape of value-based care, navigators have the potential to influence the patient experience and clinical outcomes through patient-centric navigation approaches, which may drive cost efficiencies while improving outcomes.”

The Acuity Tool is targeted for release by the end of 2019 and will be based on AONN+’s previous standardization work in 2017 to introduce 35 evidence-based navigation metrics. Other aspects of the collaboration will include bringing together subject matter experts and other oncology leaders as a task force to enable the tool to be scaled to all levels of healthcare organizations, by all types of navigators, and at all points in the cancer care continuum.

“The Patient Experience Organization within Astellas is dedicated to understanding patient needs and driving improved patient outcomes through collaborative projects with organizations that share similar aspirations and have the potential to deliver lasting effects for patients,” said Noland. “This collaboration with AONN+ will help advance our effort to be on the forefront of healthcare change by turning innovative science into meaningful value for patients beyond the medicines we innovate and bring to market.”
About Astellas
Astellas is a pharmaceutical company dedicated to improving the health of people around the world through the provision of innovative and reliable pharmaceutical products. For more information on Astellas, please visit our website at www.astellas.com/us. You can also follow us on Twitter at @AstellasUS, Facebook at www.facebook.com/AstellasUS, or LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/astellas-pharma.

About the Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators® (www.aonnonline.org)
The Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators, Inc. (AONN+) is the largest national specialty organization dedicated to improving patient care and quality of life by defining, enhancing, and promoting the role of oncology nurses and patient navigators. The organization, which has more than 8200 members, was founded in 2009 to provide a network for all professionals involved and interested in patient navigation and survivorship care services in order to better manage the complexities of the cancer treatment process.

The Journal of Oncology Navigation & Survivorship® (www.jons-online.com) is the official publication of AONN+. It is published 12 times a year and features topics related to patient navigation and survivorship care. The Journal of Oncology Navigation & Survivorship offers original research, best practices, interviews, case reports, and study highlights, as well as a platform through which navigators can share research and views on navigation and survivorship issues.

CONQUER: the patient voice® magazine (www.conquer-magazine.com) is the AONN+ premier forum for patients with cancer. CONQUER features articles written by and for patients with cancer, survivors, nurse navigators, and other oncology team members. This magazine addresses the issues that patients, their family members, and caregivers face every day in an easy-to-read format. Issues include interviews with patients with cancer, information on access to care, and articles on lifestyle topics such as nutrition, stress management, personal finance, and legal and employer issues. CONQUER also features patient stories that are nominated for the AONN+ Hero of Hope™ Patient Award, which is presented at the AONN+ Annual Conference. All stories are compiled in a special issue of CONQUER at the end of the year.
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