Merck Foundation Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care

Charting a New Course in Cancer Care



Despite major advancements in cancer treatment over the past decade, significant challenges remain to providing high-quality cancer care for all patients in the United States. About 1.7 million people are newly diagnosed with cancer each year in the United States, and the number is projected to grow as the population ages.[1]

For people newly diagnosed with cancer, the healthcare system can be challenging and overwhelming. The delivery of cancer care is often fragmented and poorly coordinated, and patients often face barriers to receiving timely and patient-centered care.[2,3] In a landmark 2013 publication, *Delivering High-Quality Cancer Care: Charting a New Course for a System in Crisis*, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued recommendations to improve the delivery of cancer care in the United States.[3] The IOM called for strengthening patient-centered care and reducing disparities in care for vulnerable and underserved populations.

Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care

The Merck Foundation (the Foundation) announces a new initiative, the ***Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care*** (the Alliance), that aims to increase timely access to patient-centered care and reduce disparities in cancer care, especially for vulnerable and underserved populations in the United States. The Alliance will work to:

» Strengthen patient-centered care, including patient-provider communication, patient engagement, and patient-centered treatment planning

» Improve patient outcomes, including satisfaction with care and quality of life

» Build sustainable partnerships that advance patient-centered care and reduce disparities in access to high-quality cancer care.

With $15 million in funding from the Foundation over five years, the Alliance will support the implementation of multifaceted cancer care programs in selected communities across the country. Through an independent cross-site evaluation, the Foundation will evaluate the impact of the Alliance and its programs. A key goal will be to disseminate the evaluation findings and lessons learned to promote best practices in patient-centered cancer care.

Join the Alliance

The Foundation is seeking letters of intent from eligible nonprofit organizations in the United States that are committed to improving cancer care and addressing the needs of vulnerable and underserved populations. Organizations will be expected to implement interventions that:

» Build on organizations' existing programs and capabilities

» Incorporate components at the patient, provider, and healthcare system levels

» Apply scientific evidence and promising practices from the field

» Involve meaningful collaborations with community partners

» Promote sustainable improvements in cancer care delivery and quality.

Please help us disseminate this Call for Proposals as widely as possible. Forward it to others, post it on your website, share via social media, and include it in communications with your members and constituents. Thank you!

Application Process

Instructions for submitting a proposal through the two-step application process are outlined below. For additional instructions and to obtain the full Call for Proposals, please click here.

Step 1. Letter of Intent

Eligible organizations are invited to submit a letter of intent (LOI) by June 30, 2016. The LOI (maximum five pages) should be submitted online at allianceforcancercare@rti.org and include:

- Project goals and objectives
- Problems to be addressed and the potential impact on improving timely access to patient-centered care, especially for vulnerable and underserved populations
- Overview of proposed intervention approaches
- Qualifications of the organization and the Principal Investigator
- Evaluation capabilities.

The Foundation will review the LOIs and invite selected applicants to submit a full proposal. All applicants will be notified whether they have been selected by August 2, 2016.

Step 2. Full Proposal

Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal by September 15, 2016. Proposals should be submitted online at www.mercksupport.com. The proposal must include:

- A project plan comprising goals and objectives, problems to be addressed, intervention approaches, community partnerships, and a project timeline
- A site-level evaluation plan comprising the evaluation design, key outcomes, data collection methods, and timeline
- Organizational capabilities and experience
- Key personnel and a staffing plan
- A detailed budget and a budget justification
- A sustainability plan.

An external advisory committee will review the proposals and make funding recommendations to the Foundation. Awards will be announced in early 2017.

Eligible Organizations

Eligible organizations must be designated as a qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States and may include public or private institutions, such as universities and colleges; cancer centers, oncology medical homes and other healthcare organizations; and community-based and nongovernmental organizations.

[1] American Cancer Society. (2016). Cancer Facts and Figures, 2016. http://www.cancer.org/research/cancerfactsstatistics/cancerfactsfigures2016/

[2] American Society for Clinical Oncology. (2016). The State of Cancer Care in America, 2016. http://www.asco.org/practice-research/state-cancer-care-america-2016

[3] Institute of Medicine. (2013). Delivering High-Quality Cancer Care: Charting a New Course for a System in Crisis. http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18359/delivering-high-quality-cancer-care-charting-a-new-course-for