

## Community Clinical Oncology Program: Questions and Answers

### Key Points

- The Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP) is a large network that enables patients and physicians to participate in clinical trials sponsored by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) (see Question 1).
- The NCI established the CCOP and the Minority-Based CCOP to ensure that cancer patients, including racial and ethnic minority patients, have access to quality medical care in their own communities (see Question 2).
- Through the CCOP network, community physicians work with scientists to conduct NCI-supported clinical trials. This collaboration helps to transfer the latest research findings to the community level (see Question 2).

### 1. What is the Community Clinical Oncology Program?

The Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP) is a large network that enables patients and physicians to participate in clinical trials across the United States and in Puerto Rico. Clinical trials are research studies conducted with patients or with healthy people. These studies are designed to answer specific questions about the effectiveness of new ways to prevent, detect, diagnose, and treat cancer.

A medical facility (such as a hospital or private practice) or a group of facilities can apply to join the CCOP and participate in clinical trials sponsored by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Facilities that serve cancer patients who are largely from minority populations may also apply to join a related program, the Minority-Based CCOP.

Facilities participating in the CCOP or Minority-Based CCOP are required to affiliate with at least one research base. A research base may be an NCI-supported clinical cooperative group or cancer center. The CCOP and Minority-Based CCOP participants use research protocols developed and provided by the research bases.



## **2. Why was the CCOP established?**

The CCOP was established by the NCI in 1983 to ensure that cancer patients have access to quality medical care in their own communities. In 1989, the NCI also approved the Minority-Based CCOP to increase the involvement of racial and ethnic minority patients in research, and facilitate their access to the latest advances in cancer treatment, prevention, and control.

Through the CCOP network, community physicians work with scientists to conduct NCI-supported clinical trials. This collaboration helps to transfer the latest research findings to the community level and provide quality care in participating communities. The CCOP network also increases the number of patients and physicians who can participate in clinical trials and allows researchers to conduct large-scale cancer treatment, prevention, and control studies. In this way, clinical questions are answered more quickly, and the latest research findings are spread to communities more rapidly. Thus, participation in the CCOP benefits patients and physicians in the community, and contributes to medical knowledge and progress against cancer.

The CCOP has been very effective in recruiting patients into clinical trials. Currently, approximately one-third of all patients in NCI-sponsored treatment and prevention trials are recruited from CCOP facilities.

## **3. Where can people find more information about the CCOP?**

Additional information about the CCOP can be found at <http://prevention.cancer.gov/programs-resources/programs/ccop> on the Internet. This Web site contains contact information for each facility in the CCOP and Minority-Based CCOP networks, and each CCOP research base. This information is also available from the Cancer Information Service (CIS), an NCI-supported nationwide service for cancer patients and their families, the public, and health care professionals. CIS information specialists have extensive training in providing up-to-date and understandable information about cancer and NCI-supported programs. They can be reached by calling the toll-free number, 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). For callers with TTY equipment, the toll-free number is 1-800-332-8615. CIS information specialists also offer immediate online assistance through the *LiveHelp* link at <http://www.cancer.gov/> on the Internet.

More information about the CCOP can also be found on a special NCI Web site that celebrates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this program. This page is found at <http://dcp.cancer.gov/programs-resources/pubs/rpts/ccop20th> on the Internet.

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**Related NCI materials and Web pages:**

- National Cancer Institute Fact Sheet 1.4, *NCI's Clinical Trials Cooperative Group Program*  
(<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/NCI/clinical-trials-cooperative-group>)
- National Cancer Institute Fact Sheet 2.11, *Clinical Trials: Questions and Answers*  
(<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Information/clinical-trials>)
- National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Centers Database  
(<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/NCI/cancer-centers>)
- *Taking Part in Cancer Treatment Research Studies*  
(<http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/Taking-Part-in-Cancer-Treatment-Research-Studies>)

**For more help, contact:**

**NCI's Cancer Information Service**

Telephone (toll-free): 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

TTY (toll-free): 1-800-332-8615

*LiveHelp*<sup>®</sup> online chat: <https://cissecure.nci.nih.gov/livehelp/welcome.asp>

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