



Dear NCCCP Pilot Site Members:

Welcome to the launch of the pilot of the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Community Cancer Center Program! Congratulations, I am proud that you will lead the nation's efforts to discover better ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat cancer. You represent an extremely critical effort to address our country's need to understand the crisis of access.

In its laboratories in Maryland, and throughout its network of extramural scientists and 63 NCI-designated Cancer Centers, NCI carries out groundbreaking research and connects patients and their families to the highest caliber, state-of-the-art care. Yet we are acutely aware that the vast majority of people in our country are diagnosed and cared for in the communities where they live. Community hospitals and private practice oncologists such as yourself provide outstanding health care for millions of Americans. NCI is committed to identifying ways to integrate the latest that science has to offer into this already exceptional community-based care.

We look to you to lead us in examining how we can best provide access to the latest scientific advances in the community setting. During a three-year pilot phase, you will develop and evaluate programs designed to determine the essential elements of effective community-based cancer care and to identify ways to facilitate broader engagement in cancer research.

An important goal is to study ways in which the community health care system can be electronically connected so that its patients can take part in the early phases of new drug development—an effort even more critical in this evolving period of highly personalized medicine. Your focus on minority and medically underserved populations will investigate multidisciplinary ways to address disparities in cancer care. Through activities such as enhanced community outreach, patient assistance, and cancer screening and follow-up, you will evaluate the effectiveness of these types of efforts to change the course of cancer for the people in these communities.

The creation of the NCCCP network of sites will serve as a model for enabling cancer research through the greater inclusion of community-based practitioners, and may provide new options for the conduct of early phase clinical trials and may speed the testing of new drugs and devices to combat cancer. Through your efforts to expand and standardize the collection of blood and tissue samples and focus on electronic medical records, the NCCCP will inform our efforts to address barriers that have hindered their widespread adoption.

With your success of the NCCCP pilot, we hope to expand the number of participating hospitals to reach an even broader range of communities in the future. And we will achieve ultimate success by the cancers prevented or diagnosed at their earliest stages, and by the number of lives saved.

With Admiration,

John E. Niederhuber, M.D.
Director
National Cancer Institute