PROVIDER SURVEY ON CARING FOR LGBTQ+ PATIENTS
MATTHEW B. SCHABATH, PhD

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual/transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) community, also referred to as sexual and gender minorities (SGMs), is a diverse and medically-underserved population that is often marginalized in a predominantly hetero- and cisgender-normative society. Estimates for the size of this community vary; studies have reported 3.4% to 12% of the adult population in the United States identifies as LGBT. Although the growing body of evidence demonstrates the LGBT population experiences increased risk for certain cancers, there have been limited efforts to address cancer disparities by sexual orientation and gender identity.

Because cancer disparities in the SGM community is a largely ignored public health issue, there is a gap in SGM-specific evidence-based clinical practice guidelines and best practice behaviors across the cancer care continuum from prevention to survivorship. In addition to having a welcoming and inclusive environment, providers should deliver culturally sensitive and clinically knowledgeable care to LGBTQ patients. To generate a relevant curriculum that addresses cancer disparities in LGBTQ patients, an assessment must be conducted to identify attitudes, gaps in knowledge, and practice behaviors among providers.

To that end, ECOG-ACRIN is conducting a survey study designed to assess oncology caregivers’ awareness of issues affecting the health needs of LGBTQ+ patients in the oncology setting. The survey will be completed by healthcare providers, physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, navigators, and CRAs who interact with patients. It is hoped that the results will provide the foundation for an oncology-specific program of research to improve care delivery and reduce disparities among LGBTQ adults with cancer.

This survey will build upon work recently published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology about a nationwide study of oncologists that assessed knowledge, attitudes, and institutional practices of LGBTQ patients with cancer.