Innovative Advance Care Planning Program Gives Cancer Patients a Voice in Care Decisions While Supporting Quality Care and Mitigating Costs

My Choices, My Wishes® empowers patients while also providing benefits to practices and payers

The Woodlands, Texas (June 24, 2013) — McKesson Specialty Health and The US Oncology Network—leaders in empowering patients to live well while fighting complex diseases like cancer—have combined their expertise to develop a unique advance care planning program that focuses on decision-making driven by patient values. The program, called My Choices, My Wishes, provides an avenue for high-quality, cost-effective care by helping patients define and document the care they desire throughout their cancer journey, eliminating unwanted and often ineffective treatment and its associated costs. The program is now available to cancer patients through participating cancer practices affiliated with The US Oncology Network.

My Choices, My Wishes is typically introduced to the patient by his or her physician. The program utilizes specially trained mid-level providers and social workers, carefully crafted educational and resource materials and healthcare information technology to identify patients, store treatment progress and preferences, define and document directives and honor patient wishes throughout their care plan. Unlike many similar programs, My Choices, My Wishes uses an ongoing, systematic process that gives patients the opportunity to continually rethink their healthcare goals and the care they desire during their cancer treatment.

“My Choices, My Wishes is a patient-centered program that guides cancer patients to make informed decisions about care options throughout the course of their treatment,” said Kevin Olson, M.D., medical oncologist and hematologist with Compass Oncology, an affiliate of The US Oncology Network. “The goal is to help patients understand and continually define what is important to them as disease progression occurs, giving them a voice in advanced-stage care decisions and helping them achieve the quality of life they desire. Our program structure allows these discussions to occur in concert with their treating oncologist’s recommendations. It also allows for all members of the care team to understand the patient’s goals as they evolve in their fight against cancer.”

The program provides many benefits to patients, allowing them to improve their quality of life within the confines of an illness at each stage of their disease. It empowers patients to make decisions while they still have time to carefully consider and discuss with loved ones what gives their life meaning and purpose, rather than making critical decisions about their care during crisis situations. Patients who have had these important discussions often have a better understanding of their end-of-life care options and may choose to stop ineffective chemotherapy at a reasonable point, transitioning to a comfort care plan where they experience the many benefits of palliative and hospice care. The program can also reduce stress for patients and their loved ones, since the patient has clearly documented and made known what treatments they want over time.

Relevant information is easily retrievable and updated as changes occur in the patient’s health status. “An important objective of quality care is to match the patient’s goals for care with the current treatment plan,” said J. Russell Hoverman, M.D., Ph.D., vice president of Quality Programs for Texas Oncology and medical director of Managed Care for The US Oncology Network. “My Choices, My Wishes supports our efforts to discuss with patients those treatment options that are most consistent with their goals for care, both in an aggressive treatment setting and at a time when their preferences for care may be less certain.”

My Choices, My Wishes also delivers significant benefits to cancer practices. Physicians and staff appreciate the program’s valuable tools that improve a patient’s cancer experience and quality of life during the final stages of care. With a better patient experience, patient satisfaction is increased and referring physician relationships are strengthened. The program also includes provider/physician documentation tools and outcomes metrics that increase efficiency in hospice referrals and chemotherapy utilization patterns. Additionally, it provides potential for innovative shared savings payment models.
Because program documentation occurs through EHR technology, reporting capability can address both the clinical and the operational aspects of providing advance care planning services. Data collection in a common database enhances the ability to promote ongoing and relevant research to further understand and improve upon patient care for those facing advanced disease.

My Choices, My Wishes also offers important benefits to payers, and several national insurance companies are participating in the program through various practices affiliated with The US Oncology Network. The program has the potential to increase member satisfaction by offering members a means to proactively self-determine quality of life issues. It also creates many opportunities to reduce overall healthcare costs while still supporting high-quality care.

My Choices, My Wishes is an innovative, new approach to advance care planning that helps to educate and empower patients to take control of advanced-stage care decisions. Additionally, it engages physicians and payers in a collaborative endeavor that aims to support value-based quality care and a better patient experience.

About McKesson Specialty Health
McKesson Specialty Health, a division of McKesson Corporation, empowers the community patient care delivery system by helping community practices advance the science, technology and quality of care. Through innovative clinical, research, business and operational solutions, facilitated by integrated technology systems, we focus on improving the financial health of our customers so they may provide the best care to their patients. For more information, visit www.mckessonspecialtyhealth.com.

About The US Oncology Network
The US Oncology Network is one of the nation’s largest networks of integrated, community-based oncology practices dedicated to advancing high-quality, evidence-based cancer care. A physician-led organization, The US Oncology Network unites like-minded physicians and clinicians around a common vision of improving patient outcomes and quality of life. Leveraging healthcare information technology, shared best practices, evidence-based guidelines and quality measurements, physicians within The US Oncology Network are pioneering new ways to achieve this vision. The US Oncology Network is committed to strengthening patient access to integrated care in local communities across the nation, including collaboration with a variety of payers, hospitals and academic institutions. The US Oncology Network is supported by McKesson Specialty Health, a division of McKesson Corporation focused on empowering a vibrant and sustainable community patient care delivery system. For more information, visit www.usoncology.com.

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