

Being an Oncology Hospitalist



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KEYWORDS

- Oncology hospitalists • Oncology hospital medicine • Hospitalists • Oncologists
- Patients with cancer • Hospital medicine

HOSPITAL MEDICINE CLINICS CHECKLIST

1. Oncology hospitalists focus on the comprehensive care of hospitalized patients with cancer.
2. The skill set of oncology hospitalists includes the practice of oncology hospital medicine, such as expert and immediate patient care, and a focus on high-value and efficient care, with special attention to the patient experience.
3. The increase in supply and demand for oncology hospitalists is likely caused by a combination of factors, including growth in the aging population with a higher incidence of cancer, a predicted shortage of oncologists, and decreases in house-staff working hours.
4. The current value proposition of oncology hospitalists is creating a position vested not only in the care for hospitalized patients with cancer but also identifying and developing efficient practices and eliminating wasteful ones.
5. Important physician considerations in finding satisfaction as an oncology hospitalist include determining their commitment to caring for patients with cancer and enthusiasm to work in the hospital environment.
6. Key skills for oncology hospitalists include proficiency in hospital medicine, a background in oncology principles, excellent communications skills, exceptional patience, and purposeful leadership.
7. Accounting for certain oncology-specific parameters and understanding each patient's cancer journey can be helpful in determining appropriate clinical care.
8. Different oncology hospitalist models exist. The optimal model for a given organization depends on that organization's specific needs and resources.

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Disclosures: None.

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9. Successful and sustainable oncology hospitalist models depend on factors such as the number of expected daily patient encounters, patient census caps, an allotment of time for end-of-life conversations, and the emotional toll in providing this often high-stress care.
10. There are many potential avenues for academic endeavors for oncology hospitalists. Experience from academic general hospitalist groups should be reviewed for guidance.

KEY PRINCIPLES**Definitions***What is an oncology hospitalist?*

Proposed definition: an oncology hospitalist is a physician specializing in the inpatient care of hospitalized patients with cancer. This definition might be further refined to include their commitment to finding pragmatic ways to practice concepts in both oncology and hospital medicine¹ for these patients. To clarify, this definition does not intend to exclude oncologists who perform inpatient care for patients with cancer or the so-called general hospitalists who deliver care for a diverse group of patients, including those with cancer.

How many oncology hospitalists are there? How many programs currently exist?

The exact number of oncology hospitalists and related programs are unknown, but at the time of writing it is estimated that there are hundreds of physicians in the United States who would identify themselves as oncology hospitalists. Several formal oncology hospitalist programs exist across the country and more are being identified through registry databases, such as those listed on the Society of Hospital Medicine website,² and via professional meetings, such as the annual Hospital Medicine Conference's Special Interest Forum. Oncology hospitalist programs have been mentioned in medical information sources.^{3,4} Informal programs are also present within defined hospitalist programs, in which hospitalists with a preference to care for patients with cancer are noted.⁵

What is oncology hospital medicine?

The term oncology hospital medicine is proposed to describe 3 main themes that can guide and characterize the care that oncology hospitalists provide for hospitalized patients with cancer: (1) expert, immediate, and on-site hospital care; (2) particular focus on value, patient safety, and quality improvement aspects of care delivery; and (3) deliberate attention to the patient experience.

Background*What factors have created the need for the growth of oncology hospitalists?*

A convergence of several factors and the ever-changing health care environment are likely driving this evolution of hospital medicine. These factors include:

- The increasing incidence of cancer that coincides with the aging population that challenges the US medical system⁶

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