

Via Oncology Pathways Now Incorporate Advance Care Planning Decision Support

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PITTSBURGH, May 4, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The most recent release of Via Oncology Pathways from D3 Oncology Solutions (D3) now includes decision support for advance care planning to encourage early discussions between oncologists and their patients about the disease, treatment intent and likely outcomes.

Recent articles on appropriate palliation and hospice have demonstrated positive effect that attention to planning end of life care can offer. One such study in oncology, a New England Journal of Medicine article by Temel JS et al, demonstrated over two months survival benefit to patients receiving less aggressive care in combination with symptom palliation in advanced non-small-cell lung cancer.

Advance care planning can be an increasingly difficult conversation for physicians, patients and family members as the disease progresses, balancing the benefit of continued aggressive treatment with a realistic appraisal of the benefit. "Via Oncology Pathways raise the topic of advance care planning early in the process before treatments begin to ensure the patient has the best chance to make well informed and thoughtful decisions," said Kathleen Lokay, president, D3 Oncology Solutions.

The addition of the advance planning feature prompts the oncologist to record whether the intent of a patient's treatment was curative or non-curative, and whether that intent was discussed with the patient. Additionally, for all patients with late stage disease, hospice or palliative care is prioritized as a pathway consideration each time the physician sees the patient. The oncologist, however, always maintains control with respect to when and how to broach the conversation with a patient make choices for end of life care.

"The advance care planning feature is designed to help foster candid discussions between the patient and physician about the realistic prognosis of late-stage disease and the costs versus benefits of additional therapies
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