

Components of an Oral Oncology Program

Considerations to Conduct Organizational Assessment: Questions Guide

Given the estimated growth of oral oncology treatments, establishing the necessary infrastructure to support a comprehensive oral oncology program is important to maintaining a clear course of patient care. To assist, this resource provides a general framework of review questions that are in line with a core set of key components for managing patient therapy with oral oncology medications. Specifically, this resource may be helpful to organizations that will need to conduct a readiness assessment for developing a new oral oncology program or to organizations that are looking to refine the processes of an existing program.

As core components of oral oncology management, each one of these involves:

Operations



- Managing flow patterns and operational processes specific to treating a patient who is prescribed oral oncology medications throughout the care continuum, from treatment planning and financial review through medication acquisition and educational training

Assessment



- Conducting baseline patient readiness assessments to evaluate if patients are appropriate candidates for therapy with oral oncology medications

Access



- Conducting financial review of patient access to insurance or other assistance programs, including identifying support resources
- Understanding the methods of acquiring oral oncology medications, most commonly through an in-house dispensing pharmacy or specialty pharmacy, including the specific advantages or drawbacks for each route of access

Treatment Plan



- Conducting comprehensive review of the patient's medical care with oral oncology medications, including obtaining informed consent and clinical history, performing clinical evaluations and review, and developing an adherence plan, among other considerations

Communication



- At a practice level, ensuring effective and coordinated communication among all providers who are part of a patient's health care team
- At a patient level, understanding when and how to communicate with the health care team, including issues related to correctly administering the oral oncology medication, monitoring adherence, and managing side effects, among other considerations

Education



- At a practice level, establishing an educational program and developing a curriculum as needed
- At a patient level, receiving educational training related to therapy with oral oncology medications

Operations

1. What are your organization's collective beliefs about oral oncology medications?
2. What are your current patterns of patient flow with intravenous oncology treatments and how do you think the integration of oral medications will affect these patterns?
3. Where and when along the patient flow of care do you think issues may arise with patients taking oral oncology medications? Specifically, what do you anticipate these issues will be and how will you plan to address them?
4. Who within the organization will be responsible for leading the overall effort to develop or refine the processes related to the oral oncology program?
5. How do you anticipate staff roles changing with the implementation of an oral oncology program?

Access

1. Who within the organization will be responsible for leading financial assessments and counseling for patients who are prescribed oral oncology medications?
2. How will patients be able to obtain their oral oncology medications (for example, through specialty pharmacy or in-house dispensing)?
3. If considering dispensing through in-house pharmacy, what will your organization need to review in terms of requirements (for example, stocking specialized items, credentialing with insurers, assessing if payers allow refills, complying with state regulations) and who will be responsible for leading this effort?
4. If considering routing through specialty pharmacy, what coordination of care and communication processes will your organization and specialty pharmacy establish (for example, monitoring and communicating patient adherence, tracking patient refills, notifying dose changes) and who will be responsible for leading this effort?

Treatment Plan

1. Who within the organization will be responsible for developing the treatment plan specific to oral oncology medications?
2. What type of information will be included in a patient's oral oncology treatment plan and how may this be different from an intravenous oncology treatment plan?
3. When will the treatment plan be reviewed with the patient and by whom?



Communication

1. How will your organization update current policies and procedures to integrate oral oncology medications? Who will be responsible for leading this effort, and how will this be communicated within your practice?
2. How will patients communicate with your organization and report issues with taking their oral oncology medications, should they arise (for example, adherence, side effects, toxicity/safety concerns)?
3. How does your organization anticipate that physician communication will change with the patients who are prescribed therapy with oral oncology medications and what type of training can your practice offer to address communication changes?
4. How will your organization communicate with other providers who are part of your patient's health care team (for example, primary care physicians, specialists, specialty pharmacy)?
5. How will your organization verify that a patient's prescription has been filled? What will be your follow-up and tracking procedures?
6. How will your organization support caregivers during a patient's course of treatment with oral oncology medications? What type of resources does your organization have access to or need to develop?
7. How will your organization manage patient adherence and monitoring with oral oncology medications and what level of support will be offered?



Education

1. In general, what is the current level of staff education and knowledge base on treatment with oral oncology medications?
2. What competency training will be provided to your organization's staff to review the integration of oral oncology medications (for example, documentation processes, patient education support)?
3. How will your practice develop a patient education plan for those who are prescribed treatment with oral oncology medications and who will be responsible for leading this effort?
 - Who provides the education and when (individual/collective)?
 - What is to be included in the educational curriculum?
 - What educational handouts and resources are provided?
 - How is the educational process evaluated and when?
 - How is the educational process documented?
 - How is the educational process reinforced, how often, and by whom?
 - Have those educating the patient and caregivers been trained on teaching about adherence and issues related to oral medications?
4. Will your practice be able to attend off-site presentations related to oral oncology management?

Organizational Assessment Outcome Summary

1. What are your organization's main areas of strength and how can these strengths be leveraged?
2. What are your organization's main areas of weakness and how can these weaknesses be addressed?