

Exercise Oncology Services

Definitions and Requirements

A protocol is in place to guide referrals for patients with newly diagnosed cancer of any site to appropriate exercise oncology services. These services may include oncology rehabilitation, exercise oncology programs provided by nationally certified exercise professionals, or community-based options, including online programs, for exercise during and after cancer treatment.

The cancer committee must implement an assessment and referral process for newly diagnosed patients to be performed at an initial patient encounter or consultation for cancer treatment within the accredited program. The assessment and referral process may be provided by any member of the patient care team, including, but not limited to, medical assistants, physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, advanced practice providers, and physicians. For those referred to oncology rehabilitation, the referral may be made by licensed providers such as advanced practice providers and physicians.

Cancer treatments can result in a multitude of symptoms that can impair the ability of patients to complete lifesaving treatments. Many of these symptoms are addressed with exercise during and after treatment. The most appropriate setting for addressing these symptoms varies according to the overall medical condition and severity of symptoms experienced by the patient. Based on the initial assessment, referrals must be offered to the most appropriate available service for that patient. These services can include:

- Oncology rehabilitation
- Exercise oncology programs

Within these services, providers are trained to address treatment-related symptom management and quality-of-life concerns through exercise therapy and make exercise recommendations for survivorship, health promotion, and disease prevention. For cancer programs that do not offer exercise oncology on-site, there are a variety of programs to which patients can be referred, including programs offered online and some offered for free.

Patients who are otherwise healthy or already physically active can be referred to community-based programs.

Protocol

The protocol must address the following:

- Assessment using a validated tool (for example, EXCEEDS, EXCEEDS Short Form, PERC, CORE, or CREST)
- Appropriate referral to oncology rehabilitation, exercise oncology programs, or on-site, online, or community-based exercise programs
- Exercise therapy, counseling, or education services offered on-site or by referral

Sites without exercise oncology services at the facility must still assess and offer a referral to patients for appropriate services.

Evaluating Exercise Oncology Services

Each calendar year, the cancer committee must monitor, evaluate, and make recommendations for improvements to on-site exercise oncology services and/or assessment and referral services.

The cancer committee must document the annual evaluation of exercise oncology services. The annual evaluation may be presented and discussed with the cancer committee at any time during the calendar year under evaluation or at a meeting during the first quarter of the following year. The annual evaluation is documented in the cancer committee meeting minutes.

If available, it is recommended but not required that a nationally certified exercise professional attend the cancer committee meeting to lead the discussion and provide the report.

Documentation

Submitted with pre-review questionnaire

- Protocol for providing exercise oncology assessment and referral services connecting patients to the appropriate services.
- Cancer committee minutes that document the required annual evaluations of the exercise oncology services.

Measure of Compliance

Each calendar year, the cancer program fulfills all of the compliance criteria:

1. Exercise oncology assessment and referral services are provided on-site or by referral to on-site, community or online services.

2. A protocol is in place to assess and offer a referral to patients for oncology rehabilitation, exercise oncology programs provided by nationally certified exercise professionals, or community-based options, as well as online options.
3. The process for referring or providing exercise oncology services to cancer patients is monitored and reviewed by the cancer committee and documented in the cancer minutes.

Resources

www.movingthroughcancer.org: Website that provides information on 2300 exercise programs across the United States searchable by state or city. The programs offer a variety of cost structures, including some free programs.

[Cancer Exercise App](#): Free app that provides individualized, evidence-based exercise recommendations for cancer patients.

[EXCEEDS Short Form](#): A short, validated assessment tool.

Bibliography

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