



Clinical Pathways in Oncology Video Series (Part 1): Leveraging and Developing Pathways for Value-Based Care



Panel

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Background

Oncology clinical pathways are detailed, evidence-based treatment protocols for delivering cancer care to patients with specific disease types and stages. These pathways can serve as an important tool to improve care quality and reduce costs.¹

In this 3-episode video series, Dr Sophia Humphreys and Dr Evan Slater share their perspectives on how organizations can leverage and develop oncology clinical pathways.

Key Highlights

- Episode 1:** When designing clinical pathways, **clinical outcomes and safety are key considerations** when defining value for all stakeholders
- Episode 2:** **Clinical pathways play an important role in value-based care**, with the potential to reduce overall cost of care
- Episode 3:** **Order sets and clinical pathways work hand in hand** to help organizations standardize medical treatment and allow healthcare providers to issue prepackaged groups of orders that apply to specific diseases

“When you design a pathway, two things must be considered. One, it must be patient centered. Two, you really need to have all stakeholders who will touch the patient. The proper design and implementation of these pathways can serve as a tool for our frontline caregivers to **increase quality, reduce variations, and, hopefully, increase financial sustainability.**”

— Dr Sophia Humphreys

Total cost of care considerations impacting clinical pathway design

When similar therapies are being incorporated into a clinical pathway, NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®) are the priority deciding factor, sometimes accompanied by an organization's own comparative clinical assessment of outcomes and safety.

"As a participating practice in the Enhancing Oncology Model, we often have to find a little more cost-effective or narrower pathway to care for those patients, and **sometimes we adopt or develop a more narrow internal pathway that might help with value-based care.**"

— Dr Evan Slater

However, our panelists agree, when all else is equal, they will look to total cost of care and economics, with several factors playing a key role in their decision-making, including:



Cost of therapy



Site of care: Inpatient, outpatient, or both



Supportive care required



Distribution network



Potential for patient adherence

"If we're discussing value-based care, oftentimes dollars and cents are top of mind, which are greatly impacted by patients surviving longer. When we're trying to prove that we're providing value, although the total cost over the time of treatment might be a little bit higher, it's because **our patients are living longer.**"

— Dr Evan Slater

Reference: 1. American Society of Clinical Oncology. Clinical pathways. Accessed March 18, 2025. <https://www.asco.org/news-initiatives/current-initiatives/cancer-care-initiatives/clinical-pathways>

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