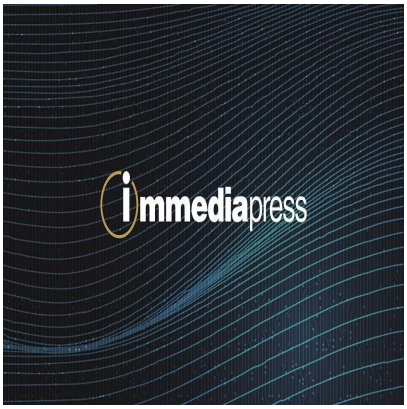

NCCN Announces Annual Awards to Honor Leaders Who Help Expand the Reach for Essential Cancer Care Resources

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COMUNICATO STAMPA â?? CONTENUTO PROMOZIONALE

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network recognizes people whose leadership, commitment, and dedication helped NCCN break new ground to define and advance quality, effective, equitable, and accessible cancer care and prevention over the past year.

PLYMOUTH MEETING, Pa. and ORLANDO, Fla., April 20, 2026 /PRNewswire/ â?? The National Comprehensive Cancer NetworkÂ® (NCCNÂ®)â??a nonprofit alliance of leading cancer centersâ??is celebrating a record-breaking year for expanding the reach of essential cancer care resources by honoring some of the notable people who have gone above and beyond in supporting NCCNâ??s mission.

NCCN recognized noteworthy individuals from across NCCN Member Institutions, other oncology organizations, and within its own staff, during the recent NCCN 2026 Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

â??NCCN continues to evolve to meet the needs of the oncology community worldwide. It is through the work of our more than 2,000 Member Institution experts on guidelines panels, hundreds of Member Institution committee members, our coalition members and collaborating organizations along with our staff, that we impact and improve the care of people at risk for, facing, and living through cancer,â?• said Crystal S. Denlinger, MD, Chief Executive Officer, NCCN. â??Each year, we present awards in appreciation of people who have demonstrated leadership, commitment, and dedication to our mission and work. This recognition allows us to acknowledge the incredible efforts of all those who help make our programs possible. I couldnâ??t be prouder to recognize the 2026 award recipients and thank them for their steadfast support.â?•

The 2026 awards included:

Outstanding Contributor Awards

This award is given to individuals who exceed expectations and provide exemplary service through their passion to improve the care of people with cancer. Over the past decade, Dr. Kubal has made significant contributions across multiple NCCN committees, conferences, and events, demonstrating a deep level of expertise and commitment to NCCN. He serves on the NCCN Best Practices Committee, including six years as Co-Chair, and led the Infusion Efficiency Workgroup, playing a pivotal role in developing a toolkit for providing oncology treatments in the outpatient setting. He is also an engaged and thoughtful participant on the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN GuidelinesÂ®) Panel for Cancer-Associated Venous Thromboembolic Disease and the NCCN Board of Directors.

Dr. Sanft was honored for her long-standing role on the NCCN GuidelinesÂ® Panels for Survivorshipâ??where she served as Chairâ??and for Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology. She was active on six subcommittees that provided recommendations on everything from healthy lifestyles and immunizations to fatigue and sleep disorders. She also joined policy and advocacy efforts by working on the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act and on the National Cancer Survivorship Standards Subject Matter Expert Group, which ultimately resulted in a publication to inform care quality benchmarks.

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Excellence in Engagement Awards

This award recognizes members of the NCCN Guidelines panels who exemplify leadership, drive, and commitment to the development of evidence-based guidelines tempered by expert judgement. Dr. Flaig has chaired the NCCN Guidelines Panel for Bladder/Penile Cancers since 2017. He was tasked with reviewing significant new data and FDA approvals in recent years, steering the panel of experts through countless hours of deliberations. He ensured that diverse voices across the panel were heard and all recommendations were thoughtful and centered on multidisciplinary care, with the patient front and center.

Dr. Riely serves as Chair of the NCCN Guidelines Panel for Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer/Mesothelioma/Thymomas and Thymic Carcinomas. He is known for his depth of knowledge, ability to conceptualize complex information for the NCCN Guidelines, and inclusiveness in welcoming differing perspectives while building true consensus. Both Dr. Flaig and Dr. Riely have participated in NCCNâ??s global efforts, including working with the African Cancer Coalition to adapt NCCN Guidelines for Sub-Saharan Africa, and other regions with varying resource levels.

Partners in Care Awards

The Partner in Care Award goes to a non-NCCN entity or individual that has worked closely with NCCN to help broaden our reach and impact the lives of people living with or through cancer. The 2026 awardees represent three organizations that have been instrumental in NCCNâ??s global efforts to advance high-quality, high-value cancer care worldwide, with a focus on resource constrained settings.

ACC and ACS have been working with NCCN since 2017 to expand access to care across the Sub-Saharan Africa region. The shared mission combines regional leadership with a sustained commitment to support better outcomes across a wide range of resource availability. Together, the organizations have publishedâ??and continue to updateâ??57 International Adaptations of the NCCN Guidelines for Sub-Saharan Africa, addressing more than 85% of the regionâ??s cancer burden. The guidelines have been endorsed by 9 ministries of health, national cancer institutes, and tertiary referral centers across the region and have been downloaded over 120,000 times by more than 76,000 unique users.

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The MENA-NCCN Regional Coordinating Center has led efforts to improve care in the region for more than a decade. As Director of the center, Dr. Alshammari has worked with regional experts in adapting 13 NCCN guidelines on a biannual basis. Under his leadership, awareness and usage of these adaptations within the region has grown significantly. He has also begun publishing on outcomes of care based on MENA-adapted guideline concordance, presenting his work at international meetings, and demonstrating the benefits from guideline adherence in Saudi Arabia.

Key Contributor Awards

NCCN also recognized four staff members who were key contributors for the year. These employees were nominated and chosen by their peers for demonstrating NCCNâ??s core values of excellence, integrity, passion, collaboration, innovation, and respect. The NCCN 2026 Key Contributor Awardees are:

During the NCCN 2026 Annual Conference, NCCN also announced the recipients of the NCCN Foundation 2026 Young Investigator Awards and the inaugural cohort for the NCCN Advocacy Academy Fellows. Learn more at NCCN.org/conference.

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About the National Comprehensive Cancer NetworkThe National Comprehensive Cancer NetworkÂ® (NCCNÂ®) is a not-for-profit alliance of leading cancer centers devoted to patient care, research, and education. NCCN is dedicated to defining and advancing quality, effective, equitable, and accessible cancer care and prevention so all people can live better lives. The NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN GuidelinesÂ®) provide transparent, evidence-based, expert consensus-driven recommendations for cancer treatment, prevention, and supportive services; they are the recognized standard for clinical direction and policy in cancer management and the most thorough and frequently-updated clinical practice guidelines available in any area of medicine. The NCCN Guidelines for PatientsÂ® provide expert cancer treatment information to inform and empower patients and caregivers, through support from the NCCN Foundation
Â®. NCCN also advances continuing education, global initiatives, policy, and research collaboration and publication in oncology. Visit NCCN.org for more information.

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