

Health Awareness

Helping Cancer Survivors Navigate Life After Treatment

(NAPS)—Here's some news that may brighten your day. Currently, there are 12 million cancer survivors in the U.S.

However, as more people win the battle against cancer, many of these survivors have questions about what comes next.

"Survivors are people living with, through and beyond cancer," said Michael Link, M.D., president of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). "The period following treatment can be full of uncertainties. It is one of the most complex aspects of the cancer experience because it is different for every person."

Accurate, easy-to-understand information can help survivors make smart choices.

ASCO offers a new booklet based on patient information found on its website, Cancer.Net (www.cancer.net). The booklet helps patients understand what to expect as cancer treatment is completed; explains common challenges faced by survivors; and offers suggestions for next steps following treatment on such things as nutrition, physical activity, quitting smoking and stress reduction. It also includes a list of questions to ask your health care providers, focusing on your long-term health.

Following active treatment, many patients find it helpful to create a survivorship care plan, in which to store information about their cancer, treatment and fol-



A new booklet found online provides a wealth of information to help those living through or beyond cancer.

low-up care. Keeping track of your medical history is useful to future doctors who will provide care.

"One of the best ways to ensure that survivors have a smooth transition into their new normal lives is to implement a survivorship care plan. Survivorship care plan documents, available free from ASCO, are helpful to ensure that doctors, nurses, social workers and other health professionals are aligned in their goals following active cancer treatment," said Dr. Link.

Survivors may also want to learn more about:

- The definitions of medical terms used after cancer treatment is completed;
- The more than 40 common side effects of cancer and its treatment;
- Setting realistic goals when making lifestyle changes, such as better nutrition or more physical activity;
- Different ways to mark milestones in your cancer treatment plan and survivorship.

For more information about cancer and for a copy of the booklet, visit ASCO's website at www.cancer.net.