Mental Health is a Critical Component of Quality Cancer Care

With support from BeiGene, a new Cancer Support Community survey of more than 600 U.S. cancer patients and survivors who faced emotional or mental health concerns revealed unmet needs and barriers to mental health care.

Emotional distress is prevalent across the cancer continuum, and the greatest number of people experience mental health concerns during diagnosis, treatment, and recurrence.

Even those who are post-treatment or have no current evidence of disease often experience some form of emotional distress.

67% during treatment

65% at recurrence

65% waiting for test results

61% at diagnosis

Even those who are post-treatment or have no current evidence of disease often experience some form of emotional distress.

60% of those in distress were not referred to a mental health professional by their cancer care team

20% who wanted mental health support did not receive it

Individual viewpoints and external access issues present barriers to mental health care:

- Belief things will improve on their own
- Discomfort discussing feelings
- Fear of appearing “weak”
- Inability to afford treatment
- Uncertainty where to get help
- Long wait times to get care

People want services and activities beyond counseling to help alleviate distress, such as:

- Exercise classes
- Nutrition programs
- Meditation classes
- Support groups

There are opportunities to engage diverse stakeholders to address mental health needs of the cancer community:

PATIENTS & CAREGIVERS: Learn to recognize signs of emotional distress and seek resources to best meet individual needs

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS: Continue to find innovative ways to make mental health a central part of quality cancer care

POLICYMAKERS: Remove persistent financial and access barriers to professional mental health services

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS: Unite and expand initiatives and programs that promote mental health education and access

* Scan the QR code to learn more about Talk About It.

**Cancer Support Community (2022). Cancer Experience Registry Spotlight Survey: Identifying Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Care among Cancer Patients and Survivors [Unpublished data; August 2021]