A new feature in Proceedings: Baylor Sammons site tumor conference reports

With this issue of Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings, we begin a new feature on reports from the Baylor Sammons site tumor conferences. The goal is to have one or two of these reports in each issue.

When the Baylor Charles A. Sammons Cancer Center opened on May 1, 1976, one site conference on gynecologic oncology was already in place. There was also a “tumor board.” Many physicians felt that the older concept of a tumor board, where a small group of physicians heard about patients with a variety of different types of cancer, was outmoded. New advances in multidisciplinary and combined-modality approaches created the need for separate committees for the major sites. Each site tumor committee in turn was responsible for organizing and running a site tumor conference.

The site tumor conferences have developed into successful endeavors. The Sammons Cancer Center now holds 240 multidisciplinary and educational site-specific conferences each year, with case discussions of about 800 patients. Individual conferences focus on bone and soft tissue, breast, chest, skin, head and neck, the endocrine system, the gastrointestinal system, neurology, urology, gynecology, and hematopoietic diseases. Attendance has grown each year to more than 6000 attendees in 2007, including representatives from multiple medical disciplines as well as fellows, residents, interns, nurses, and allied health professionals. Continuing medical education credit is provided.

All conferences are sponsored, planned, and implemented by the Sammons Cancer Center site tumor committees, which report to the cancer center medical committee. These conferences have become the “nuts and bolts” of the Sammons Cancer Center and oncology activities at Baylor. They directly contribute to high-quality patient care and learning at multiple levels.

I know of no other cancer center or institution that conducts a similar scope of regular multidisciplinary oncology conferences. The success of our conferences is a result of active participation by numerous physicians. These conferences continue to thrive because of the enthusiasm and devotion to clinical excellence of many members of our medical staff.

—Marvin J. Stone, MD
Director, Baylor Charles A. Sammons Cancer Center