

# UNM Cancer Center Physician Tapped to Serve on National Committee Examining Cancer Quality, Cost

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Dr. Richard Lauer

A University of New Mexico Cancer Center physician is adding his voice to an influential national discussion over how best to improve the quality, safety and affordability of cancer care. Dr. Richard Lauer, executive medical director of the UNM Cancer Center and a specialist in blood and urologic cancers, has accepted an invitation to serve on the American Society of Clinical Oncology's new Provider-Payer Initiative Workgroup, convened last fall to address a set of critical issues in cancer care rarely addressed in a collaborative setting. Lauer will join oncologists, private insurers and policymakers engaged in productive dialogue about health care costs, quality of care and administrative overhead.

"These are such important topics for all physicians and institutions committed to delivering the best possible care while managing costs and improving administrative efficiency," said Lauer, who oversees the quality of care at the UNM Cancer Center and has 25 years of experience in oncology. "I am delighted and honored to bring a perspective from New Mexico's leading cancer center to the table."

"Ensuring that New Mexico is part of these national conversations is very important to us," added Dr. Cheryl Willman, director and CEO of the UNM Cancer Center. "All New Mexicans benefit when we are

able to share our perspectives and experiences with national audiences and help shape practices and policies in cancer care.”

Lauer has taken a national leadership role in a number of important initiatives through the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the world’s leading professional organization for physicians who treat cancer. In 2010, he accepted an invitation to join ASCO’s Clinical Practice Committee, which creates guidelines and recommendations that influence cancer care. Lauer is also one of just 10 physicians nationwide appointed by ASCO’s president to the Clinical Practice Steering Subcommittee, a leadership group within the larger committee.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death nationwide, after heart disease. Cancer care in the United States costs almost \$100 billion each year. In creating the Provider-Payer Initiative, ASCO aims to foster discussion and shared understanding among providers (oncologists) and payers (private insurers) with the goal of creating new strategies for optimizing the quality of patient care while managing costs for all involved. One key item of discussion is the reduction in administrative overhead for providers and payers alike, potentially achievable through unifying and simplifying payment mechanisms.