Cancer as a Chronic Disease: Curriculum for Survivorship
Required Objectives for Medical School Core Curriculum

Knowledge
1. Understands that all cancer survivors are at increased risk for other cancers as well as recurrence of the original cancer, and need to avoid tobacco, eat right, and use sunscreen
2. Understands basic mechanisms of genetic contribution to risk of cancer
3. Understands common uses of the terms “cure”, “disease free survival”, and “cancer survivor”
4. Understands differences in cancer survivorship by gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status
5. Understands the variety of social consequences of cancer on survivors, including difficulty getting employment and insurance, stigma, and the impact on the family and friendships
6. Knows the essential elements to obtain about a cancer history, how to get information the patient can’t give them, and how to interpret the health implications of the history
7. Understands consequences of cancer treatment for different developmental stages, including impact on growth, osteoporosis, learning, sexual function and fertility

Skills
1. Able to use key screening guidelines to identify people at higher risk for cancer
2. Able to provide appropriate and individualized recommendations for secondary prevention to cancer survivors regarding sunscreen, diet, obesity, exercise, alcohol, and tobacco
3. Able to tailor pain medication and other interventions for pain to the source and type as well as the severity of pain
4. Able to explain and help patients make decisions about a Living Will, do not resuscitate (DNR) orders, Durable Power of Attorney, and Advance Healthcare Directives
5. Able to give bad news about second malignancy or relapse, and to move to a palliative approach when appropriate without saying “there is nothing we can do”
6. Able to partner with patients in decision-making, respecting what is important to the patient
7. Able to work as the primary care provider with a specialty team, providing continuity of care, and working with family as well as patient
8. Able to get current cancer information for cancer survivors at the appropriate reading level and language (e.g. from the Cancer Information Service and National Cancer Institute)

Attitudes
1. Comfortable prescribing medications for pain control, including opioids
2. Comfortable asking new patients routinely about previous cancers
3. Willing to ask oncologists for consultation when appropriate
4. Considers general preventative issues as well as those related to cancer survivorship in cancer survivors
Additional Objectives for Possible Electives

**Knowledge**

1. Knows the specific follow-up care and surveillance indicated for survivors of specific cancers, depending on the organ systems at increased risk, and the effectiveness of different types of surveillance
2. Understands the short and long-term consequences and toxicities of common cancer treatment modalities, including radiation, surgery, hormonal therapy, immunotherapy and chemotherapy
3. Knows the current 5-year survivals of breast, prostate, colon, lung and childhood lymphatic cancers, and differences between issues for short, intermediate and long-term survivors
4. Understands the common emotional, memory and personality issues secondary to treatment, anxiety, guilt, posttraumatic stress response, and changes in body concept and sexuality
5. Understands issues for special populations of survivors, including childhood cancer survivors as they transition from adolescence to adulthood; specific cultural groups; elderly; non-English speaking; prisoners; people with mental illness
6. Understands long-term impact on fatigue and quality of life in survivors

**Skills**

1. Able to address the sense of betrayal or being “cursed” if there is a relapse and to deal with anxiety and oversensitive responses to routine medical issues
2. Able to help patients and families with genetic issues, including explaining relative risk, when to get genetic counseling and testing, and who should get the results
3. Able to work with patients using complementary and alternative therapies such as yoga, support groups, or spiritual approaches