



Georgia on My Mind...Reflections of the International Cancer Education Conference 2018

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As this 2019 new year continues, I find myself becoming nostalgic on the most recent International Cancer Education Conference (ICEC), which occurred in Atlanta. My thoughts are reflected to the timeless classic “Georgia on My Mind,” the official state song of Georgia. To me, this song is a magical celebration of the music of a number of tremendous artists, including Ray Charles, Otis Redding, James Brown, Ella Fitzgerald, Willie Nelson, Louis Armstrong, Glenn Miller, Coldplay, Gladys Knight, Dean Martin, and many, many more. Why? Possibly because it has a pleasing melody and a laid-back feel. Perhaps because so many artists from different genres have chosen to focus on and perform this song. Or maybe because it stirs feelings of home and security. To me, the ICEC represents a place to be inspired, encouraged, and supported by a variety of colleagues from different areas of interest. Much like this song, the ICEC represents a place like “home.”

The theme of this year’s conference was Cancer Education: Bridging the Gap through Health Equity, Innovation and Advocacy in Global Communities. The goals of this conference were concentrated on the use of evidence-based practices and on new and creative models that support best practice and facilitate interdisciplinary research and collaborations among practices in cancer education on the national and international levels. In support of these goals, the international presence included Australia, Canada, Israel, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Palau, Poland, and the USA. This presence was complemented by video from our colleagues who were simultaneously attending the World Cancer Congress in

Malaysia. Together, the American Association for Cancer Education (AACE), the Cancer Patient Network (CPEN), and the European Association for Cancer Education (EACE) created an atmosphere to use critical skills, ask questions, evaluate evidence, and engage in interesting and difficult conversations. The mobile-friendly conference attendee website can be found at icec2018.sched.com to view the conference schedule and abstracts. Additionally this year, the plenary sessions were recorded. Readers will be notified when the recordings are available.

The Shades of Pink Breast Cancer Survivor Choir opened the 2018 ICEC. This inspirational group consists of breast cancer survivors who bring a message of encouragement and hope through singing. The opening plenary, presented by Dr. Otis Brawley, provoked our attendees to take a critical look at Cancer Control in the twenty-first Century. This was followed by equally engaging plenary sessions by:

- Mandi Pratt-Chapman on Caring for Diverse Populations: What You Should Know about Your LGBTQI Patients
- Rebecca Wong on Building Clinical Capacity through Education – Towards a Unified Approach for Individualized Solutions
- Chanita Hughes Halbert on Social Determinants and Changes in Self-Regulation Among African Americans
- Darren Starmer on Exposure to Cancer Patients During Clinical Placement: Are We Adequately Preparing Tomorrow’s Doctors?

Together, these plenary sessions complemented each other to provide a broad representation of the myriad components that constitute cancer education. These sessions gave the attendees a sense of where we are now, how we got here, and what cancer control in the twenty-first century might look like if we continue to diligently engage in this work.

Of note, Sarah Krug moderated a thought-provoking and poignant Patient/Survivor Panel. This commanding session highlighted survivorship issues from the patient’s perspective.

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Through this session, panelists could masterfully reflect on their individual health experiences. Complementing this panel with The Samuel C. Harvey Lecture—Cancer Education: A View from Both Sides of the Table by John Daly—exposed participants to the full range of survivor and caregiver cancer experiences. Additionally, a tour through the acclaimed National Center for Civil and Human Rights—with presentations focused on civil and human rights issues, both past and current—provided members with the opportunity to get a glimpse at the range of rights that have been often overlooked.

Prior to the start of the 2018 International Cancer Education Conference meeting, I had entreated each of you to prepare to be inspired, encouraged, and empowered. During

this process, I encouraged each of you to anticipate and formulate the possibilities for new collaborations. I hope, the experience has continued to invigorate you to use your critical skills, ask questions, evaluate evidence, and engage in interesting and difficult conversations at your respective communities with the new tools and ideas that you have gained for education. Continue to embrace these concepts until you can return to the next International Cancer Education Conference. Continue this extraordinary work until you are able to come back “home.”

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