**2021 ASTRO Education Needs Assessment**

**ASTRO CME Mission Statement**

**ASTRO’s Core Purpose**

Advance the field of radiation oncology.

**ASTRO’s Core Values**

**•** Excellence in patient care

• Improved outcomes

• Innovation

• Integrity

• Diversity and inclusion

**Society’s Mission**

The American Society for Radiation Oncology is dedicated to improving patient care through education, multidisciplinary clinical practice, advancement of science, and advocacy.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Society’s Continuing Medical Education (CME) program is to (1) identify and address gaps in knowledge, competence and performance, (2) provide high-quality evidence-based education opportunities that are designed to increase competency, (3) provide a wide range of programs in recognition of the diversity of both our target audience and the communities they serve, and (4) facilitate lifelong learning and self-assessment to ensure that new information, and knowledge and skills are incorporated into practice.

**Target Audience**

The Society’s CME activities primarily are designed for radiation oncology physician members and other Society members who make up the entire cancer treatment team—including physicists, biologists, radiation oncology administrators, radiation therapists, medical dosimetrists, radiation oncology nurses, and other medical professionals. ASTRO also focuses on fostering collaboration between radiation oncologists and the larger medical community.

**Types of Activities**

ASTRO’s CME activity types include live courses, internet live courses, enduring materials and journal-based CME. These types of activities are delivered in a variety of formats including hands-on workshops, topic-specific and multidisciplinary symposia, online learning, self-assessment programs, journal articles, live sessions (including refresher courses), panel presentations, proffered paper sessions, and poster discussion sessions. These delivery methods meet a variety of learner preferences, and are appropriate for the setting, objectives and desired results of the activity.

**Content Areas**

ASTRO’s core education content areas will include, but are not limited to, standard, investigational and experimental therapeutics; clinical aspects of external beam radiation therapy, intraoperative radiotherapy, brachytherapy and unsealed radioactive sources, including altered fractionation, protraction, and dose-rate considerations; basic and translational research related to oncology in general and radiation oncology specifically: oncologic imaging and radiation oncology treatment planning; medical physics; emerging technologies; multidisciplinary oncology care; healthcare policy reform, cost, quality, value, survivorship, patient safety; and professionalism in practice.

Specific content topics are identified based on data findings from ongoing assessments using membership surveys and evaluation instruments implemented by ASTRO or affiliated organizations such as the American Board of Radiology (ABR). Other relevant data are reviewed from national sources, clinical trials, subject matter experts, initial and maintenance of certification requirements and committees established within ASTRO to identify continuous learning opportunities and ongoing quality improvement strategies.

Embracing a multidisciplinary approach to cancer care is essential to quality care. Research from basic and translational scientists, medical and surgical oncologists, pathologists, and other physician experts enhances the interdisciplinary nature of ASTRO’s overall CME program.

**Expected Results**

The ASTRO CME program is designed to give learners an opportunity to increase their level of knowledge and skills, as required to improve competency in radiation oncology and affiliated aspects of oncology. The expectation is that learner-participants will subsequently apply new strategies and make appropriate practice modifications. ASTRO will measure these results through post-activity assessments, pre-and post-activity tests, and follow-up evaluations.

Revised August 2018

**Professional Practice Gaps/Needs**

**Activity Proposal Process:**

ASTRO identifies professional practice gaps and the learning needs of its learners as part of its planning process for all educational activities. All activities are planned and implemented in full compliance with the accreditation requirements and policies established by the ACCME. ASTRO’s educational staff and committee members are responsible for ensuring that each activity meets the ACCME’s requirements.

All ASTRO’s activities are planned through a systematic process using a planning worksheet (proposal submission) designed to document essential elements of instructional design and ACCME compliance. First, ASTRO staff work with planning committee members to collect needs assessment data to identify professional practice gaps and connect them to the participants’ learning needs. Each activity’s needs assessment data is gathered from numerous sources including:

* Review of related historical CME offerings
* Prior planning committees’ notes (i.e. wrap-up or debrief call after the previous activity)
* Evaluation data (which provides past participant demographics, participant self-identified learning needs, potential practice changes and barriers to change)
* Annual membership needs assessment survey
* Review of current medical literature
* Review of evidenced based guidelines, statistical data, and epidemiologic data
* Public Health Data
* Quality improvement data

Through this process, ASTRO ensures that the professional practice gaps identified are linked to our learners.

Planning committees serve as subject matter experts and have planning calls as part of content development to help contribute and further determine the educational needs. Planning worksheets are also completed at the session level. Faculty complete session planning worksheets and further delineate professional practice gaps and educational needs.

Those responsible for completing the planning worksheet are requested to include current supporting reference(s) (journal articles, white papers, clinical practice guidelines/statements, news sources, etc.) In addition to identifying practice gaps, planners and faculty are asked to create a gap statement describing the problems learners have in practice that the educational activity intends to address. Learning needs are then categorized in terms of knowledge, competence and/or performance and include additional references to support the statements of need. Learning needs are used to write a description which is provided to learners to allow them to identify appropriate activities for their own areas of interest.

ASTRO’s educational activities must also follow a process in which committee volunteers (members of ASTRO) delineate how the activity aligns with ASTRO’s strategic plan and membership priority. Other vital elements committee volunteers provide for consideration include: the problem/opportunity the program is designed to address (including practice gaps and needs), the timeliness and benefit to ASTRO, the target audience, the business case, metrics for program evaluation, and any other considerations ASTRO’s Board requires. The Education Council and its Committees continually review educational programs to ensure they foster the Society’s mission.

**2019-2020 Practice Gaps and Needs**

Learner’s are asked to complete an evaluation at the end of each activity. Key questions are asked to provide key information related to self-identified learner’s needs, barriers to change, and challenges learners face.

**Barriers to change**

When asked, “Are there barriers to changing or improving your practice that ASTRO could address through education?” Overall evaluation responses:

* Lack of evidence-based guidelines
* Multidisciplinary miscommunication
* Treatment of adverse events
* Gaps in understanding all available treatment options

**Challenges Physicians Face**

In the 2020 membership survey, respondents were asked “From the following list of professional issues, identify the top three challenges you will face over the next three years.” Options were: Staying current with new clinical trends/techniques, increased complexity or severity of cases, disruption of patient/physician relationship, consolidation of practices, challenges interacting with other members of the care team, time or financial cost of MOC, or cost of malpractice insurance.

* Staying current with new clinical trends/techniques
* Increased complexity of severity of cases
* Disruption of patient/physician relationship

**Educational Topics:**

Below is evaluation data collected from 2020 meetings and surveys. Learners across all ASTRO education activities are asked to select what topics they are interested in learning more.

**ASTRO - Current Educational Offerings**

* Annual Meeting
* Annual Refresher Course/onDemand
* Advocacy Day
* Best of ASTRO onDemand
* Coding and Coverage Seminar
* Multidisciplinary Head and Neck Cancers Symposium (2022)
* Multidisciplinary Thoracic Cancers Symposium (2021)
* Research Workshop (topics change annually)

**ABR -General Radiation Oncology Topics**

* Pediatrics
* Pediatric CNS Tumors
* Gastrointestinal Tract
* Gynecology
* Genitourinary (GU) Tract
* Lymphomas and Leukemias
* Head, Neck and Skin
* Lung/Mediastinum
* Breast
* Soft Tissue/Bone
* Central Nervous System
* Non-Clinical Skills
  + Bioethics
  + Patient and Personnel Safety
  + Biostatistics
  + Quality Assurance