In Cancer Care, a Second Set of Eyes Can Change Everything

(NAPS)—There are nearly 5,500 new cancer diagnoses every day in the U.S., and many of these are for patients under the age of 50. As cancer cases continue to rise and affect more Americans than ever before, many oncologists are choosing to expand their care teams with specialists around the country.

Helpful Survey

A recent survey of specialists across the United States found that while 95% of doctors support or recommend a second opinion, oncologists were the most likely to recommend patients use virtual second opinions (VSOs) to seek expert advice on their diagnosis and treatment. The survey, fielded by The Clinic by Cleveland Clinic, found that nearly half of oncologists "regularly" refer patients to a VSO, versus just 12% of doctors from other specialties.

"Cancer can present in a variety of ways, with dozens or hundreds of types and degrees that are unique to each patient," said Dr. David Peter, Chief Medical Officer at The Clinic by Cleveland Clinic. "Most oncologists understand the value of having someone with years or decades of experience in a specific cancer type review a diagnosis and treatment plan. It's a second set of eyes that can save lives and add valuable insights to unique cases."

Findings show this expertise pays off. In 70% of cases, the expert VSO recommended a change to the initial diagnosis or treatment plan. Further, 57% of patients had an improved diagnosis and reduced morbidity after seeking a second opinion.



For many people with cancer, getting a second opinion is a first rate choice.

When asked why doctors recommended a VSO to patients, 74% reported that it was to overcome geographic limitations, and 61% said it was to gain insights on rare medical conditions.

Why A Second Opinion

"Many people in the U.S. live in specialty care deserts, and the best person for your specific case might be all the way across the country," Dr. Peter added. "Patients and providers are turning to virtual tools to make better care more accessible to everyone."

"Once in a lifetime diagnoses should not be handled alone," one doctor wrote in the survey. "Through virtual second opinions, patients have the opportunity to collaborate with physicians who handle rare diseases and chronic conditions on a daily basis, accessing a vast referral network of experts."

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