



# Society for Palliative Radiation Oncology: report from the Tenth Annual Meeting (2023)

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Founded in 2014, the Society for Palliative Radiation Oncology (SPRO) is a non-profit professional organization that functions at the local, national, and international levels to promote excellence in palliative radiation oncology care (1). Through research, education, collaboration, and patient advocacy, the Society aims to advance evidence-based palliative radiotherapy and early integration of high-quality palliative care. SPRO's international membership consists of researchers, educators, and clinicians from the fields of Radiation Oncology and Palliative Medicine, drawing from both academic and community settings. This journal, *Annals of Palliative Medicine*, is the official journal of SPRO (2).

Building on the prior year's meeting (3), SPRO's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was held in San Diego, California on October 1, 2023. Dr. Emily J. Martin, President and Chair of the Board of Directors, opened the meeting with a warm welcome to the 32 individuals in attendance. She thanked the Executive Committee, including Drs. Candice Johnstone (Past President), Sara Alcorn (Vice President), Eric Chang (Treasurer) and Drew Bruggeman (Secretary), for their dedication to advancing the Society's mission. Dr. Martin summarized SPRO's focused efforts to develop a sustainable organizational infrastructure and to enhance member engagement, highlighting that, due to these efforts, the Society is well-positioned to meaningfully impact the field.

Dr. Sara Alcorn, Chair of the Membership Committee, provided a report of the SPRO Member Survey, spearheaded by Dr. Malcolm Mattes (Board Member), and summarized ways for members to engage in organizational efforts (e.g., Committee involvement, quarterly seminars, research/education collaborations, and website development). Dr. Alcorn reminded attendees that nominations to serve on a SPRO Committee have been reviewed and invitations will be emailed to selected individuals in December 2023.

Dr. Drew Bruggeman, Chair of the Communications Committee, summarized the importance of identifying opportunities to partner with the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO), the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM), the Canadian Palliative Radiation Oncology Group (CPROG), and the Association of Residents in Radiation Oncology (ARRO) in the year ahead. He highlighted efforts to send quarterly organizational updates to improve SPRO's social media presence, and to develop a repository of educational and clinical resources on the Society's website.

Dr. Eric Chang, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided a financial report, highlighting the key role of donations in covering operational costs. The Executive Committee hopes to secure grant support to fund multi-site educational and research efforts in 2024.



**Figure 1** Dr. Shekinah Elmore’s moving keynote presentation addressed equity in the delivery of palliative oncology care.

During the meeting, Dr. Martin awarded the Rising Star Award to Dr. Shekinah Elmore, Assistant Professor and Director of the Metastatic Disease Program in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A tireless advocate for patient-centered decision-making and equitable access, Dr. Elmore is an internationally recognized researcher working to advance global palliative radiotherapy and develop a patient-centered outcomes research agenda in palliative radiation oncology. Upon accepting her award, Dr. Elmore delivered the keynote presentation, “Equity and Empathy in (Palliative) Oncology Care: Perspectives from a Patient Doctor,” in which she reflected on how her own journey through cancer treatment has informed her role as a radiation oncologist and health services researcher (Figure 1). Following her inspiring presentation, members discussed opportunities to further advance health equity, education, and collaborative research.

Dr. Martin concluded the meeting by thanking all attendees for the rich discussion and continued engagement.

To learn more about SPRO or to join the mailing list, visit [www.spro.org](http://www.spro.org).

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## Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* All authors have completed the ICMJE uniform disclosure form (available at <https://apm.amegroupp.com/article/view/10.21037/apm-24-25/coif>). Y.D.T. served as the unpaid Editorial Board Member of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* from February 2022 to January 2024. C.J. serves as the unpaid co-chair for the Palliative Radiotherapy Subcommittee of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* from February 2022 to January 2026. C.B.S. serves as the co-Editor-in-Chief of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* from April 2014 to April 2027. Y.D.T. reports that she received honoraria for lectures from University of Maryland (visiting professor, symposium) and has leadership roles on committees (Chair in ASTRO scientific committee palliative care track and Co-Chair in PTCOG lymphoma subcommittee). M.D.M. reports that he received research funding from Radiation Oncology Institute and New Jersey Health Foundation, Robert A. Winn Diversity in Clinical Trials Career Development Program from Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, outside the submitted work. J.R.B. reports that he received research support from Rowpar Pharmaceuticals, speaking honorarium from the Arizona Dental Association, and support to attend the Alpha Tau investigators’ meeting, outside the submitted work. The other authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

*Ethical Statement:* The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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