

# Society for Palliative Radiation Oncology: report from the Fourth Annual Meeting (2017)

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Society for Palliative Radiation Oncology (SPRO) is a worldwide group of radiation oncologists who strive for palliative radiotherapy that is effective, efficient, safe, cost effective and collaborative. SPRO's Mission Statement is to promote and advance the practice of evidence-based palliative radiation therapy through research, education, and advocacy (1). SPRO held its Annual Meeting on September 24, 2017, in conjunction with American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) Annual Meeting in San Diego, California. The event was held on the San Diego waterfront and attended by 43 radiation oncologists and resident trainees. Dr. Candice Johnstone welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.

Dr. Susanna Ellsworth from Indiana University discussed the development of an educational toolbox for residents on palliative care topics ranging from palliative radiotherapy to opioid titration. The group discussed the importance of developing competencies such as prognostication, communication, and breaking bad news. Dr. Hiral Fontanilla from Thomas Jefferson University shared her own curriculum with the group. SPRO has plans to develop a palliative care curriculum incorporating work completed by SPRO members and other professional societies.

At the end of the meeting, the group brainstormed the top goals for the next year. The first goal is to highlight the accomplishments of SPRO over the past 3 years. The second goal is to advocate for radiation oncology residents who want to pursue a palliative care fellowship after their

third year of residency followed by resumption of their final year of radiation oncology residency training. The third goal is to develop an outline of a comprehensive palliative radiation curriculum for residents and to work with the American Board of Radiology to ensure that the material is tested on certification examinations. The fourth goal is to create a compendium of information to help guide radiation oncologists as they develop palliative radiation oncology programs at their institutions outlining the successes and barriers of the pioneers.

After the last Annual Meeting in 2016 (2), SPRO submitted four proposals for educational sessions at the 2017 ASTRO Annual Meeting. "Mythbusting in Palliative Radiation Oncology: Overcoming Barriers to Shorter Course Palliative Radiation Therapy" and "Challenging Cases in Palliative Care: That Wasn't in the Textbooks!" were selected and featured as oral sessions at the Annual Meeting. Topics for 2018 proposals include palliative radiotherapy in era of immunotherapy, medical marijuana and complementary therapies, the role of high cost radiotherapy techniques in the palliative setting and toolkit for management of common symptoms.

Updates about the Society are available in regularly published newsletters of SPRO that appear on the website of SPRO (<http://www.spro.org>), as well as the website of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* (<http://www.amepc.org/apm>), the official journal of SPRO. Please feel free to contact Dr. Johnstone at [cjohnstone@mcw.edu](mailto:cjohnstone@mcw.edu) with questions about SPRO.

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## Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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