The Role of Lung Cancer Advocacy Organizations in Biomarker Testing

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Purpose: The 2018 National Lung Cancer Roundtable (NLCR) initiative was co-hosted by 7 organizations to advance biomarker testing. Geared initiatives toward patient education are needed to establish biomarker testing as standard of care for patients with advanced-stage lung cancer.

Methods: A survey was conducted to assess barriers to biomarker testing among physicians and patients. The survey was conducted online from November 2017–January 2018, and included questions about the physicians’ and patients’ experiences with biomarker testing.

Results: In total, 214 physicians and 211 patients participated in the survey. Physicians reported the following barriers to biomarker testing: lack of knowledge and awareness (61%), lack of reimbursement (57%), and lack of patient awareness (46%). Patients who were aware of biomarker testing were more likely to know that it can be done (96%) and to undergo biomarker testing (69%).

Conclusions: Additional education and awareness are needed to establish biomarker testing as part of standard of care in patients with advanced-stage lung cancer. The ultimate goal is that every patient has a full biomarker panel available (or at least tests in progress) at their first appointment with an oncologist.

A unified effort from lung cancer advocacy organizations, healthcare providers, and industry partners is needed to achieve this goal.