

OUTSIDE LINES



FINDING A NEW NORMAL FOR ONCOLOGY CARE

Today's Top Pick, Curated for Leaders Changing Healthcare

May 14, 2020

All of healthcare has been markedly changed these past few months due to COVID-19. For oncology care — and the doctors, nurses, and cancer centers scrambling to prioritize and continue treatment for patients — each day of delay has near- and long-term consequences.

The questions are many. How to balance the risk of COVID-19 vis-à-vis that of delaying treatment and care services? How, especially, to protect lung cancer patients who are at highest risk? How to re-tool oncology care in the days, months, and years ahead to increase safety for patients?

The disruptions in cancer care have serious implications. A *Lancet Oncology* editorial, published on May 1, notes that care decisions being made globally during the COVID-19 pandemic could decrease cancer survival by 5% to 10%.

The situation for lung cancer patients is more complex. Early studies coming out of China and Italy are indicating 30% to 40% mortality rates for lung cancer patients affected by COVID-19.

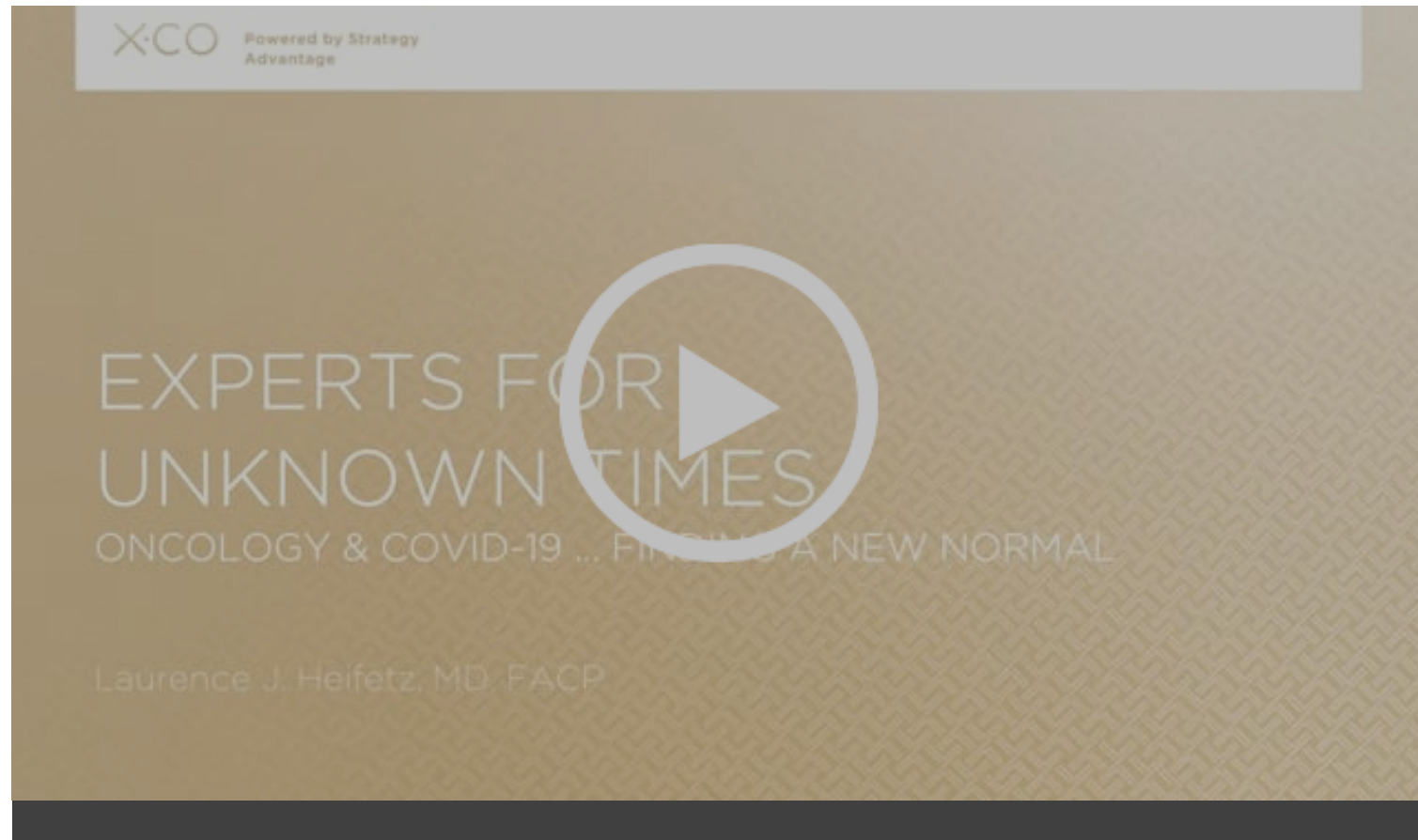
New guidelines for cancer care are being issued around the world as we speak. As an example, the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO), with the CDC, are re-writing the rule books for clinical care, home care, high-risk subpopulations, and other care guidelines.

As the world shifts, oncology care will be altered. Dr. Laurence Heifetz, a medical oncologist with 40+ years in practice, predicts a reframing of the status quo that will include adjustments to current practices for new patient workups, therapy sequencing, and patient monitoring. [Listen](#) to this video below to hear more about Dr. Heifetz' suggested set of action steps as oncology finds a new normal for care. As Dr. Heifetz shares:

“My unfortunate intuition is that it will take at least a few more months of heightened rigor and COVID sensitivity before we can lighten up. And out of this, the global oncology community will have 6 months or more of new data and new kernels of truth. One of the great lessons in all of this is that we will re-think what we’ve always known to be the best, absolutely necessary care for cancer patients. Wouldn’t that be an interesting way to move into the future?”

EXPERTS FOR UNKNOWN TIMES

In our Unknown Times series, Strategy Advantage offers quick interviews with our experts to provide answers and action steps to address immediate questions on healthcare leaders' plates. This week, we feature oncology care. How do you steady the waters in the midst of so much risk for cancer patients today? And how do you re-think and re-tool oncology care in the months and years ahead?



[Laurence Heifetz](#) MD, FACP is a board-certified Medical Oncologist who was in private practice at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles for many years, started and was the Medical Director of the Gene Upshaw Memorial Tahoe Forest Cancer Center in Northern California, and is one of the experts in our [X:CO](#) network, powered by Strategy Advantage.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click [here](#) to see *The Lancet Oncology* article that notes predictions of cancer survival decreasing by 5% to 10% as a result of COVID-19 disruptions in cancer care.

Read more [here](#) about the implications of COVID-19, including the much higher mortality rates for lung cancer patients affected by COVID-19.

Read more [here](#) on the new guidelines provided by ASCO and CDD for cancer care during the coronavirus pandemic.

Click [here](#) to access other *Outside the Lines* issues produced by Strategy Advantage.

This bi-weekly e-mail is curated by the expert team from Strategy Advantage and provides a look across the horizon, and outside the lines, of the healthcare industry.

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