One of the most common and potentially life-threatening side effects of chemotherapy is neutropenia and the subsequent development of infections. Infections in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy may lead to hospitalization, disruptions in chemotherapy schedules, and in some cases, can be life threatening. It has been estimated that each year, 60,000 patients are hospitalized for chemotherapy-induced neutropenia, and a patient dies every two hours from this complication.

Infections among cancer patients can also occur as a result of poor infection control practices performed by providers during routine healthcare procedures. Outbreaks of bacterial and bloodborne pathogens have been associated with unsafe injection practices (i.e., reuse of syringes and improper handling of medication vials) and lack of adherence to aseptic techniques.

Through a CDC Foundation collaboration with Amgen, the CDC is leading a three-year initiative focused on preventing infections in cancer patients.

**OBJECTIVE**

Develop a comprehensive campaign focusing on preventing infections in cancer patients by targeting patients, their families, and their providers to reduce their risk of infection. In order to achieve our objective, the campaign has two components:

**Patient Outreach:** Interactive Online Education Program that provides individually tailored information on preventing infections in cancer patients

**Provider Outreach:** Evidence-based Model Infection Control Plan targeted toward outpatient settings

**PATIENT OUTREACH**

Development of an evidence-based, interactive online program that provides individually tailored information on preventing infections in cancer patients aimed at empowering them with the knowledge and skills to recognize the signs and symptoms of infection, and to implement measures to prevent and control those infections.

**PROVIDER OUTREACH**

Development, creation and dissemination of infection control standards for oncology healthcare providers in ambulatory care settings to prevent healthcare-associated infections in cancer patients. Specifically, a Model Infection Control Plan will be produced that outlines infection control policies and procedures that can be tailored to any oncology clinic. Components of the Model Infection Control Plan will include guidance on:

- Appropriate Antibiotic Prescribing
- Injection Safety
- Hand Hygiene
- Basic Infection Control Measures (respiratory hygiene, environmental cleaning and disinfection, etc.)

**CAMPAIGN MATERIALS**

As part of the initiative, a number of supporting materials will be produced, each aimed at raising awareness of infection prevention. The format of these materials has yet to be determined, but may include posters for oncology clinics, patient brochures, fact sheets, etc.