

# Researchers key to advance care planning with cancer clinical trial patients

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Connie M. Ulrich, PhD, RN, FAAN, the Lillian S. Brunner Chair in Medical and Surgical Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing). Credit: Penn Nursing

Cancer clinical trials are an important option for patients with cancer. Yet, once a trial ends, patients still need care plans. Little is known at what point during clinical trial transitions to initiate advance planning

discussions or how to educate research teams to communicate with and prepare patient-participants and their families for the next steps after they leave a cancer clinical trial.

In a recently published 'Viewpoint' article in *JAMA Oncology*, Connie M. Ulrich, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, the Lillian S. Brunner Chair in Medical and Surgical Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing), underscores that clinical trial researchers are well positioned to initiate advance care planning discussions to help [cancer patients](#) and their families with their post-trial needs.

"Participation in a cancer clinical trial presents a crucial opportunity to engage patients and their families in meaningful dialogue about end-of-life care and [palliative care](#), to clarify misconceptions about trial goals, to foster conversations about advance care planning, and to help patients make informed decisions about next steps," said Ulrich.

Ulrich stresses that good normative and [empirical data](#) are needed to better understand the post-trial needs and expectations of cancer trial patients; the role of advance care planning discussions during cancer trial transitions; and the psychological, physical, and social support factors that influence participants' and their caregivers' perceptions of these transitions.

**More information:** Connie M. Ulrich et al, Time for Advance Care Planning Discussions During Transitions in Care in Cancer Clinical Trials, *JAMA Oncology* (2019). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2018.6872](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoncol.2018.6872)

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