

For Immediate Release
Nov. 2025

NCBC Awarded Pfizer Grant to Develop the Nation's First Certified Clinical Oncology Navigator (CCON) Program Focused on Metastatic Breast Cancer



Indiana IN — The National Consortium of Breast Centers (NCBC) is proud to announce that it has been awarded a prestigious quality improvement grant through the Pfizer External Research & Grants (ER&G) program, administered in partnership with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN®). This competitive grant will support NCBC's development of the Certified Clinical Oncology Navigator (CCON) certification—a groundbreaking national credential designed to elevate the standards of oncology navigation, with a focus on metastatic breast cancer (mBC).

The project is led by **Kristie Bobolis, MD, FNCBC, BHCN, CGRA**, NCBC Board Member and Lead Investigator.

Advancing Navigation Excellence for Patients Across the Country

Cancer care requires highly coordinated, evidence-informed, and person-centered navigation. Yet across the United States, the role of a clinical oncology navigator varies dramatically between institutions—resulting in inconsistent patient experiences, variable quality, and gaps in access to guideline-concordant care.

The CCON certification will directly address these gaps by establishing a **national, competency based standard** for clinical oncology navigation with an emphasis on mBC, ensuring that patients receive seamless guidance, timely treatment coordination, and supportive care throughout the metastatic journey.

"Navigation is the backbone of patient-centered oncology care," said **Kristie Bobolis, MD**, Lead Investigator. "This grant allows us to build a rigorous, nationally recognized certification that empowers navigators to deliver high-quality, evidence-based support for individuals diagnosed with cancer with an emphasis on people living with metastatic breast cancer. It is long overdue and urgently needed."

A Transformative Step in NCBC's National Certification Platform

NCBC's certification portfolio—already home to two NCCA-accredited credentials (BHCN and CGRA)—has long set the bar for professional excellence in breast health. The CCON program



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builds on that foundation and represents NCBC's next major step toward strengthening the quality and consistency of oncology navigation across the country.

"This initiative reflects NCBC's unwavering commitment to improving the patient experience and raising national standards in breast cancer care," said **Kimberly Samuels, Executive Director of NCBC**. "The creation of CCON will have a lasting impact on navigators, healthcare providers, and most importantly, the patients and families who depend on them every day."

Ensuring a Path Toward National Accreditation

Grant funding will support the development of a comprehensive certification framework, including:

- National job-task analysis and competency validation
- Curriculum and exam blueprint development
- Psychometric oversight and certification pathway planning
- Pilot testing and quality validation aligned with NCCA standards
- A long-term plan to secure full NCCA accreditation for CCON

By formalizing the role of the clinical oncology navigator, the CCON aims to improve:

- Guideline-concordant care delivery
- Treatment adherence
- Patient engagement and shared decision-making
- Care coordination for complex metastatic pathways
- Provider performance and interdisciplinary communication

About the National Consortium of Breast Centers (NCBC)

The National Consortium of Breast Centers is the leading interdisciplinary organization dedicated to breast health excellence. Through national certifications, quality initiatives, education, and its flagship Annual Interdisciplinary Breast Center Conference, NCBC supports more than 30,000 breast health professionals and over 2,200 members nationwide. NCBC is committed to advancing evidence-based practices, elevating the patient voice, and ensuring that all individuals affected by breast disease receive the highest standard of care.

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