Dear Readers,

I begin with my heartfelt thanks to the medical team and frontline personnel who have relentlessly rendered their services during the pandemic.

This quarter began on a challenging note with our country in the grip of the COVID19 pandemic. Our work was at its most critical juncture. Challenges were for real, be it complete lockdown, containment of critical hubs, or fear of being infected; but transforming this phase into opportunity and emerging stronger as a team was the mantra.

Seamless channels for delivering our commitment were cultivated during this phase. Aggressive plans were made, and these were implemented at all levels. While the Human Resource team ensured hassle-free adaptation of the work from home culture, the Projects team mobilised people at all the sites, and the Outreach team resumed its NCD screening camps at the tea gardens.

Results of perseverance are visible.

Our first Onco-Care centre at AMCH was inaugurated, along with our fourth Swasth Assam Kiosk, by the Hon’ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on June 05.

The Nursing Fellowship Programme introduced in the month of June is another milestone that we have achieved. This is a unique training programme on oncology nursing for ACCF nurses. The programme is aimed to develop the skill sets required for holistically managing cancer patients.

As we continue our journey on the noble mission for the people of Assam, please take care of yourselves and your loved ones. The world is talking of a new normal. But I believe that with every passing day, we are one day closer to the ‘newer normal’.
Be Informed | Be Prepared | Be Smart | Be Safe
Be Ready to Fight

COVID 19

Fighting Pandemic Together, Preparing the workplace

ACCF registered Office Guwahati
The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has brought in an alternative work culture around the globe – the culture of Work From Home (WFH). This paradigm shift - if not altogether a new concept, maybe challenging for a few beginners.

However, this work culture has been very well embraced by ACCF team with ample support from the leadership. We hope to witness this enthusiasm by everyone, while we cope to get back to newer normalcy – a world where COVID coexists.

In this time of crisis, like most organizations – the functioning of office did slowdown in the beginning to a certain extent. However, we picked up speed and efficiency in no time. It is noteworthy that as a responsible and employee-centric organization, we have remained focused and have delivered optimally.
Infrastructure - The foundation

Launch of Onco Care and Swasth Assam at Dibrugarh

The Onco Care Centre and Swasth Assam Kiosk were inaugurated on June 05, 2020 by Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Hon’ble Minister, Health & Family Welfare in presence of Shri Pijush Hazarika, Hon’ble Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare, Shri Prasanta Phukan, Hon’ble MLA, Dibrugarh, Shri Pallav Gopal Jha, DC Dibrugarh, Dr. H. K. Goswami, Principal, AMCH, and a host of dignitaries.

The Onco Care centre is strategically planned to provide adequate day-care facility in view of the rising demands of chemotherapy and radiation treatment. The centre’s design was entrusted to Architect Firm – Edifice and the contract was awarded to Aveecons India for renovation of the existing oncology ward and retrofitting of an existing LINAC bunker. It also included landscaping and beautification of the access area. The project commenced in December 2019 and team ACCF along with MOTT Macdonald supervised the construction works which was completed in March 2020. The inauguration of the Onco Care centre was, however, delayed due to the prevailing Covid scenario.

Located in the premises of iconic AMCH, Dibrugarh, the Day Care Chemotherapy facility is adequately staffed by a senior medical oncologist and trained nurses. The team works in close coordination with the various departments of AMCH to provide comprehensive care to cancer patients. The state-of-the-art Linear Accelerator equipment is as of now being installed and the radiotherapy operations will start shortly.
Swasth Assam

The Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) screening kiosk is housed in a porta cabin placed near the entrance gate of the OPD at AMCH. It aims to focus on the kith and kin of patients visiting AMCH for healthcare.

We are happy to have catered to the long standing requirements of a significant number of patients in a short span of time in the Onco Care - Dibrugarh. Since its inauguration, the day care centre has already treated more than three hundred patients. Whilst delivering quality cancer care, we are able to build the trusts and confidence amongst patients and the community.

Lakhimpur Project - on-site challenges

Mobilization at Lakhimpur Project site began in December 2019 and construction work progressed as planned until March 2020. Soon challenges emerged in the form of pandemic lockdown and waterlogging.

Although we received due permission from concerned authorities to continue construction during lockdown, waterlogging severely affected our work for four months. Dewatering of the site became a matter of concern. Higher capacity pumps were arranged to drain out water but, this was not sufficient.

The team ACCF is appreciative of the Lakhimpur District Administration and Municipal Board who extended all possible help. Additional pumps were set up and this time the attempt was successful. Water level started receding and construction work has been resumed and is going on in full swing.
IT Bandwidth

Unleashing Information Technology Element

Setting up of most infrastructures are complete only when it has been IT enabled. At ACCF, we have built and adapted to the digitized system since the functioning of operations in September 2018. ACCF IT team has been consistently researching on improvising the system with an endeavour to deliver better with each upcoming cancer care structure.

In the recently launched Onco Care Centre at Dibrugarh, the IT infrastructure was strategized after careful assessment of feasibility and scope. Led by Head Operations, the team did a detailed study of end to end journey of patient and came up with a flow chart for implementation.

The execution work began with installation of highspeed internet connectivity. Network switches and other equipment were set up and tested. The most important part of the project was Hospital Information System (HIS) and to impart training to the medical team on site. This itself became a challenge when lockdown was announced in March - travelling of the IT team from Guwahati to Dibrugarh and logistic arrangements for training staff.

We could overcome all these obstacles with support from the on-site projects team. We ensured that full support and technical know-how required for end user was provided to the medical team. Hands-on training was imparted using pre-operations environment and with dummy data. Later, when the operations of the centre began, we ensured seamless management of production environment which captures real time patient data.

As of today, we have over three hundred patient data entries and the IT team is happy to have delivered on time despite the many obstacles.

Samiran Das
Lead - IT
Focus

Our Gratified Patient!

A significant aspect of palliative care is the humane touch. COVID scare has left us with very little or no options in communicating with our patients. People fear travelling in public transport even for visiting our Palliative Care Unit (PCU). On an occasion, a patient’s son had to cycle 60 Kms to our unit to get medicines.

However, with our patient Raju (name changed), aged 72 years – we were able to break the barrier. He was unhappy for not being able to visit us personally and discuss his problems. For three months, his son would come from an interior village of Dhemaji district to collect the opioid analgesic tablets, without which his father would spend sleepless nights with anguish due to pain. He requested us to attend a video call with his father and we obliged. Raju was delighted with the fact, that he was able to speak to us and show us the nodes in his neck. It took us just seven minutes to bring a smile on his face. It was an ecstatic moment of realisation that it was not just the patient who was happy - we all were happy too. We firmly believe that going that extra mile can make a difference to someone’s quality of life.

Tata Trusts-ACCF Nursing Fellowship Programme

ACCF with the Tata Trusts has rolled out its prestigious Nursing Fellowship Programme (NFP) on July 20, 2020. The training programme is uniquely designed to develop skill sets of ACCF nurses and prepare them for specialized oncology nursing.

Oncology nursing is critical by virtue of dealing with cancer patients. The eleven months training protocol will enable the nurses of ACCF to develop their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies. Each module is designed to provide specific nursing competencies, enabling them to deliver contemporary high quality nursing care.

As an inclusive programme, this training will enhance soft skills, counselling, teaching and other technical traits required for care of patients undergoing cancer treatment, along with educating them and their family members.

On successful completion of the fellowship, each participant will be awarded a certificate issued jointly by ACCF with the Tata Trusts.
Raising Awareness Through Community Outreach

Common NCD screening and awareness programme has been successfully resumed at four Tea Gardens of APPL at Lamabari TE-Udalguri, Namrup TE-Dibrugarh, Bhelaguri TE-Jorhat and Letekujan TE-Golaghat.

Earlier the programme was withdrawn due to COVID19 restrictions, however the teams are back with much vigour. The outreach team of ACCF is stationed at the respective tea estates for the next few months and will continue providing its services along with the Social Welfare Team of these estates. Focus will be on sustaining awareness and preventive measures of COVID19 along with tobacco control initiatives. Tobacco use is known to cause decrease of immunity or negatively affecting the immune system of the human body - making the user vulnerable to numerous diseases. For e.g. smokers may have a reduced lung capacity which would greatly increase risk of COVID19 complications.

Door-to-door visits are also being conducted to make people aware on healthy food habits and exercising, which are not only important cautionary practices against COVID19, but also useful for other existing non-communicable diseases (NCD). Provision is also made for screening of COVID19 in selected areas of the tea gardens. Up till now 3541 people have benefitted from the programme.

Dr Rajiv Pathni said, “With the restarting of the ACCF community outreach programmes, we believe it will provide a further impetus to the ongoing efforts of the Government in containing the current COVID19 crisis. Our team will be working closely with the stakeholders in the tea gardens to conduct daily awareness programmes and community screenings of COVID19 along with common NCDs.”
Exclusive Feature

Tips for Work from Home

Since March 2020, life has changed for all of us, irrespective of our professions and age. This new way of life was thrust upon us, with not much time to think, plan or adapt.

As when you work from home, you are managing home and work, while being at home. The expectations from you are different, as compared to when you work from an office.

Balancing the home chores, the family interactions and achieving deadlines at work can get challenging. So how do we balance the situation?

Sharing a few tips for Effective Working from Home:

» Communicate with family and set expectations. Ask them for their support. Assure them you are there, yet you need time for undisturbed work, like audio-video calls
» Manage your time well, plan the day and adhere to at least 75% of it. If you do not plan the day, you will be swamped with activities that you have never anticipated
» Find the right space at home, where you could work for most part of the day
» Ensure you are comfortable at the space you are working from and your chair is comfortable, as you might end up spending long hours on your work desk
» Be mentally agile, as activities will never unfold as you anticipated, be ready to change gears and adapt quickly. As any rigidity will hinder your progress throughout the day
» Add at least thirty minutes of “Me time” to your day, to devote to activities you enjoy
» Take short breaks, to do what relaxes you, else burn out is evident if you keep working relentlessly managing work and household chores

» Plan to start the day at a particular time and adhere to it, get dressed, as if it were a workday and get a head start physically and mentally
» Close the day at the agreed time and avoid the tendency to work beyond what you had decided at the start of the day on most days
» As we progress in the new WFH culture, some of the most critical changes will occur. The corporate culture will change, team working will get redefined and governance styles will change. Some of the factors that will determine the success of WFH are trust, space, empowerment, and motivation.
» Trusting each other is a catalyst to effective WFH. Giving space to employees to allow them their personal time without intrusions. Empowering others to shape their workday as per their home situation and personal styles. And lastly, motivating employees through these challenging times.

Laila Sethna
Programme Manager - Training, Tata Trusts
Snippets

SCI: Health talk to patients and caregivers on 'Post-Operative wound care at home'

Dr Rajiv Pathni, Head Ops, ACCF, Akash Pradhan, Sr Executive, Tata Trusts, with Dr Arundhati Deka, State Programme Officer – State Tobacco Control Cell, Assam during her visit to ACCF Corporate Office

Orientation Programme for Onco Care and Palliative Nurses at AMCH
Anti-spitting campaign Poster Competition on ‘Public Spitting and COVID-19’ in collaboration with National Service Scheme and State Tobacco Control Cell - Assam

Interactive session at SCI on ‘Post Radiation Care’
Panel discussion on North East Live television on the World No Tobacco Day 2020

Webinar held on World No Tobacco Day 2020

Interview on Radio Mirchi on World No Tobacco Day 2020

THE IMPACT OF COVID19 ON TOBACCO USERS

WEBINAR
WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY 2020

Various studies have reported the adverse effects of tobacco use — including in particular — as a risk factor for COVID-19. Smokers who contract COVID-19 have been shown to have lower treatment rates. In a review of many related studies, it is evident that COVID-19 has contributed significantly to reduced smoking.

The webinar provides an opportunity to discuss tobacco control efforts. It is important to highlight information relating to the public, including the tobacco industry and volunteers advocating for tobacco-related issues.

To mark this occasion, in collaboration with the World No Tobacco Day, Assam Cancer Care Foundation and State Tobacco Control Cell Assam, is hosting a webinar for the volunteers of National Cancer Institute of Tobacco Control in India. Through this webinar, we wish to educate the NCA students on the relation between Tobacco and COVID-19 and in doing so, increase awareness among the volunteers.

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<tr>
<th>Relations between Tobacco and COVID</th>
<th>Law Prohibiting Tobacco Use in Assam</th>
<th>Role of Youth</th>
<th>Role of Media and Social Media</th>
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Dr. Ravi Patnaik, Dr. Debabrata Gogoi, Dr. Ankur Dutta
State Tobacco Control Cell, Assam

MAY 31, 2020
WEDNESDAY | BEANIE DINTER PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPUS | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Interview on Radio Mirchi on World No Tobacco Day 2020

Stay connected
@AssamCancerCareFoundation @CareAssam @CareAssam

Registered office:
3rd floor | V.K. Trade Centre | Opposite Down town hospital | G.S. Road | Guwahati Assam
781022 +91-90852 02020 | info@accf.in