

# Most Cancer Survivors Return to Primary Care After Cancer Treatment

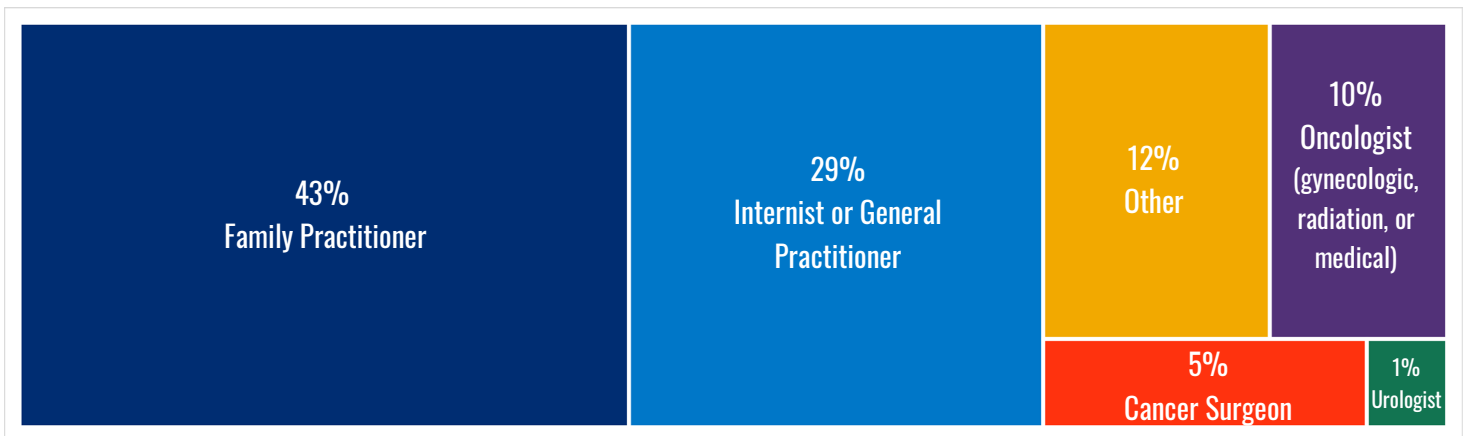


A cancer survivor is a person who has cancer or who has had it in the past.<sup>1</sup> Over 1.1 million cancer survivors live in New York State.<sup>2</sup>

Cancer survivors are at a greater risk of developing cancer than people who have never had cancer. This may be due to treatment effects, genetics, or health behaviors like smoking, exercise, diet, and alcohol use that contributed to the first cancer. Cancer survivors also often face physical, emotional, psychosocial, and financial problems because of their diagnosis and treatment.<sup>3</sup>

After cancer treatment, survivors need their follow-up care to be coordinated between their oncology and primary care teams. Primary care providers can monitor patients for the possible late effects of cancer and its treatment. They can also provide coordinated care, promote healthy behaviors, and facilitate receipt of needed cancer screening.<sup>3</sup>

**72% of cancer survivors in New York State report receiving most of their regular health care\* from primary care providers, including family practitioners (43%) or internists or general practitioners (29%).**



Data Source: New York State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021

\*What type of doctor provides the majority of your health care? If respondent requests clarification: What type of doctor do you see most often for illness or regular health care e.g., annual exams and/or physicals, treatment of colds, etc.

## Public Health Opportunity

A coordinated approach between oncologists and primary care includes:

- Use of standardized survivorship care plans or written treatment summaries for patients with a history of cancer.
- Use of cancer survivorship care guidelines from the American Cancer Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology, or National Comprehensive Cancer Network.
- Implementation of best practices for survivorship coordinators and navigators located in pediatric and adult oncology centers.
- Completion of the George Washington Cancer Center's [Cancer Survivorship E-Learning Series for Primary Care Providers](#).

For more information, please send an e-mail to [BCDER@health.ny.gov](mailto:BCDER@health.ny.gov) with IFA #2024-01 in the subject line. To access other Information for Action reports, visit the NYS Department of Health website: [http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/injury\\_prevention/information\\_for\\_action/index.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/injury_prevention/information_for_action/index.htm)

1. New York State Department of Health. (2021). *Cancer Survivorship*. Retrieved October 25, 2023, from <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/cancer/survivorship/index.htm>.

2. New York State Cancer Registry. (2020). *Estimated Cancer Prevalence, New York State*. Retrieved October 25, 2023, from <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/cancer/registry/table8.htm>.

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). *Cancer Survivors: Information for Health Care Providers*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved October 25, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/survivors/health-care-providers/index.htm>.