Foreword
Disparities and Determinants of Health in Surgical Oncology

Traditionally, *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* has focused on disease- or organ-specific cancer topics. In identifying topics for this year’s issues, I believed that it was critical to address disparities and determinants of health within the larger field of surgical oncology itself. As such, this issue of the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* is particularly important. Like all of you, I believe we are obligated as medical professionals to address disparities, and to use our collective voice to foster awareness around disparities within oncologic care. In turn, we wanted to be purposeful in having a specific issue of *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* that addressed diversity, equity, and inclusion within the context of surgical oncology.

Multiple previous studies have identified race, socioeconomic status, as well as insurance status as factors that are strongly associated with cancer-specific outcomes, including receipt of guideline-compliant care, risk of perioperative morbidity and mortality, as well as differences in long-term disease-specific survival. In fact, social circumstances and environmental exposures are among the most important contributors to early death in the United States. Social determinants of health have been defined by the World Health Organization as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. These determinants can include factors such as housing, transportation, education, employment, and access to care. The COVID-19 pandemic only served to lay bare even more how race/ethnicity, privilege, and social determinants of health all so often dictate health care outcomes and access to care. In light of this, I am grateful to have Dr Oluwadamilola M. Fayanju as the guest editor of this important issue of *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America*. Dr Fayanju is the Helen O. Dickens Presidential Associate Professor and Chief of Breast Surgery at Penn Medicine, University of Pennsylvania Health System. Dr Fayanju obtained her medical degree at Washington University in St. Louis, where she also subsequently completed her residency. Dr Fayanju then completed a Breast Fellowship at the University of
Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Dr Fayanju has a strong and long-standing commitment to promoting equity and efficacy with which breast cancer patients are treated, a guiding principle that is reflected in her clinical practice and research endeavors. She is an academic breast surgeon who conducts health services research focused on addressing disparities in breast cancer outcome and treatment as well as improving the quality and efficiency of breast cancer care delivery using the principles of value-based health care. As such, Dr Fayanju is imminently qualified to be the guest editor of this important issue of *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America*.

The issue covers a number of important topics, including financial toxicity, barriers to equitable palliative care, as well as how bias and disparities impact access to care for pancreatic, breast, colorectal and, among others, peritoneal cancers. In addition, the issue also tackles other important topics, such as disparities in recruiting and retaining a diverse surgical oncology team, as well as the challenge of implementing integrated health care systems into oncology care to improve outcomes for all. Furthermore, the topic of disparities in clinical trials, as well as proposals and solutions to tackle this challenge, is presented. In sum, the talented group of authors amassed by Dr Fayanju holistically addresses issues of diversity and disparity related to patient care, as well as the health care team and the health care delivery system.

I am very grateful to Dr Fayanju for her work in identifying such a wonderful group of oncology leaders to contribute to this issue of *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America*. The team of authors has done a skillful job of highlighting the importance of diversity, as well as the need to incorporate attention to social determinants of health into the care of all our cancer patients. I am convinced that this issue of *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* will serve us well to help identify ways in which we can address disparities in cancer care that, it is hoped, will lead to addressing and eliminating persistent inequities. I would like to thank Dr Fayanju and all the contributing authors again for an important issue of the *Surgical Oncology Clinics of North America* that should inform how we care for all our patients with cancer.

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