



# 2022 ACS CAN ALASKA POLICY FORUM

## *Cancer Patient Navigators: Your Guides Through the Healthcare Maze*

Wednesday, September 7th | 8:30 a.m.

### **Debby Duncan, Panelist**

Cancer Survivor/Patient, Salcha, AK

Debby Duncan grew up in the Adirondack Mountains, close to the Canadian Border. She met her future husband there when he was stationed at the Air Force base. The military brought them to Eielson Air Force Base in the interior of Alaska in 1987. In 1993, they bought their dream home in Salcha, AK and raised three wonderful daughters. They still enjoy living there.

In Ms. Duncan's own words: "In May of 2022, I was found to have two tumors. Needless to say, my life started changing overnight and became very complicated. My doctor put me in touch with the navigation team at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. They were there to help me navigate all the things I needed help with, from travel arrangements to supporting and holding me up when necessary. They helped turn something devastating to me into a blessing."



### **Casey Anderson, Panelist**

Cancer Patient Advocate/Navigator  
Katmai Oncology Group, Anchorage, AK

Casey Anderson has served as a patient advocate with Katmai Oncology Group for just over two years and previously worked in the role of patient navigator with the American Cancer Society for two and half years. He was drawn to this field and work following his own experience with cancer both as a patient and caregiver and sees the tremendous value this role can provide. He is currently pursuing a Master of Social Work degree at UAA in order to further support patients. In his free time (which is scarce between work and school,) Mr. Anderson enjoys fishing, camping, reading, and music. A life-long Alaskan, he and his wife make their home in Eagle River.



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### **Kelly Marre, LMSW, OSW, Panelist**

Oncology Social Worker/Navigator  
Central Peninsula Hospital, Soldotna, AK

Kelly Marre serves as the oncology social worker on the patient navigation team at Central Peninsula Hospital in Soldotna. Ms. Marre holds undergraduate degrees in Human Services and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage. She is also a certified grief educator. Ms. Marre is a cancer survivor herself and many of her family and friends have been affected by cancer. These experiences have led her to help others navigate their cancer journey since 1999. When she is not at the office, Ms. Marre can be found working with her husband running an RV park and cabins in Kasilof or spending time with their children and grandchildren.



### **Gladys Arias, MPA, Panelist**

Health Equity Policy Principal, ACS CAN National Office

Gladys Arias is a Principal for Health Equity Policy Analysis and Legislative Support at the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). In this role she works to advance public policy that will improve health equity across the cancer care continuum. Her current projects include in-depth analysis of the role patient navigation can play in increasing health equity and policy approaches to building up navigation programs nationwide.

Prior to ACS CAN, Ms. Arias served as a Policy Advisor for the Mayor's Office of New York City where she led and supported various citywide programs in partnership with the city's health department, which serves 8 million New Yorkers, as well as with the largest public hospital system in the U.S. Ms. Arias has also previously worked in global health in Sub-Saharan Africa, coordinated health education programs in NYC schools, and advised healthcare clients across the U.S. Ms. Arias earned her Master of Public Administration from New York University as well as a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Pittsburgh.



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### **Beverly K. Wooley, Moderator**

Retired Public Health Leader, Big Lake, AK

Beverly Wooley is a retired public health professional with over 30 years of experience in Alaska. She was raised in Alaska and went to Washington State University where she received her degree in Dietetics and Nutrition. Some of her leadership positions included: Director of the Alaska Division of Public Health, Director of the Municipality of Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services, and Community Health Systems Director at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. An 18-year breast cancer survivor, Ms. Wooley is passionate about advancing health policies focused on realistic, sustainable solutions to ensure health care access and equity for all.



### **Emily Nemon, MPA, Host**

Alaska Government Relations Director, ACS CAN

Emily Nemon is the Alaska Government Relations Director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. In this role she works to change laws at every level of government to help prevent cancer and help people access care when they need it. She's been doing this work for 21 years.

In addition to leading statewide efforts, like the successful smoke-free workplaces campaign, Ms. Nemon works with volunteers and statewide coalitions to achieve wins for cancer patients like the new telehealth law. She also supports local community coalitions in capacity building and planning for local public health policy efforts.

Ms. Nemon studied history at UAA and earned her Master in Public Administration from the University of Washington. She and her husband live in West Anchorage.