Why is this Report Important Now?

- The number of cancer survivors in the United States has more than tripled to almost 10 million over the past 30 years thanks to advances in detection and treatment.
- Survival rates are increasing, but no one knows at what cost to the health and well-being of cancer survivors. Patients diagnosed with cancer have an estimated 64 percent chance of surviving five years, compared with a rate of 50 percent three decades ago.
- More than six million cancer survivors are over age 65, making this a particular challenge for Medicare, which bears most of the cost of care.
- One in nine adult cancer survivors under age 65 is uninsured; many of these people report problems accessing medical care and not getting needed prescription medicines related to their post-treatment.
- As Baby Boomers age and new cancer screening and diagnostic tools are developed, the number of survivors needing follow-up care will also increase. Health care providers need guidance and guidelines on how to direct the care of cancer survivors.
- Most cancer survivors will return to work following their treatment but approximately 1 in 5 will have cancer-related work limitations up to 5 years later.

Cancer Survivor Figures

Estimated number of cancer survivors in the U.S. from 1971 to 2002

SOURCE: National Cancer Institute
Distribution of cancer survivors in the U.S. by site, 2002.
SOURCE: National Cancer Institute

Distribution of female cancer survivors in the U.S. by site, 2002
SOURCE: National Cancer Institute

Distribution of male cancer survivors in the U.S. by site, 2002
SOURCE: National Cancer Institute

Drawn from From Cancer Patient to Cancer Survivor: Lost in Transition, 2006 • Institute of Medicine • www.iom.edu