



NCCN Evidence Blocks™

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are NCCN Evidence Blocks™?

NCCN Evidence Blocks™ are a visual representation of five key components of value that provide important information about specific recommendations contained within the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®). These five components are: efficacy, safety, quality and quantity of evidence, consistency of evidence, and affordability.

Q. Who are the intended users of NCCN Evidence Blocks™?

NCCN Evidence Blocks™ are intended for all users of NCCN Guidelines®, including providers and patients, as well as other stakeholders involved in the treatment decision-making process, as a means to initiate a discussion of value between a provider and patient. Together, the five measures—efficacy, safety, quality and quantity of evidence, consistency of evidence, and affordability provide the individual information to make their own assessments of value.

Q. How are the criteria in NCCN Evidence Blocks™ scored?

To develop NCCN Evidence Blocks™, NCCN Guidelines panel members score each measure using a standardized scale from “1” to “5”, with “1” being the least favorable and “5” being the most favorable.

For efficacy and safety, panel members use both their knowledge of the published data cited within the NCCN Guidelines—often developed in highly selected patients—and their clinical experience with treatment in the more diverse real-world patient population.

Quality and consistency of data are rated using evidence cited within the Guidelines and the panel members’ knowledge of the data supporting the treatment.

Affordability is rated using and the panel members’ knowledge of overall cost of the regimen, including cost of drug, administration, required supportive care, identification and management of toxicity and probability of hospitalization.

Q. How do you read an NCCN Evidence Block™?

Final scores from the NCCN Guidelines panel members’ analysis are tabulated and rounded to the closest score between 1 and 5. The final scores are then used to build the 5x5 table that constitutes the NCCN Evidence Block™ for the intervention.

Each column in the NCCN Evidence Block™ [the “X” axis] corresponds to an outcome characteristic. From left to right, the outcome characteristics are efficacy (E), safety (S), quality and quantity of evidence (Q), consistency of data (C), and affordability (A).

The blocks within each column [the “Y” axis] are shaded in from bottom to top representing the corresponding score for each measure, “1” to “5”.

NCCN EVIDENCE BLOCKS CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS

5						E = Efficacy of Regimen/Agent
4	■		■			S = Safety of Regimen/Agent
3	■	■	■	■		Q = Quality of Evidence
2	■	■	■	■		C = Consistency of Evidence
1	■	■	■	■	■	A = Affordability of Regimen/Agent
	E	S	Q	C	A	

For more information see [NCCN Evidence Blocks™ User Guide >>>](#)

Q. How do you compare NCCN Evidence Blocks™?

When the NCCN Evidence Blocks™ are placed within the NCCN Guidelines algorithms, a user can quickly scan a group of potentially appropriate interventions and make treatment recommendations based on what is most important to the patient.

Q. How does NCCN know what each therapy will cost?

The affordability measurement is not a hard cost to each patient; it represents an estimate of overall total cost of a therapy, including but not limited to drug acquisition, administration, in-patient vs. out-patient care, supportive care, infusions, toxicity monitoring, antiemetics and growth factors, and potential for hospitalization. The affordability measurement does not include indirect costs, such as transportation or time lost from work; nor does it attempt to assess direct cost to patients, as these costs vary widely based on individual circumstances. If affordability is of concern to an individual, a low score in the “A” column should be considered a catalyst for further discussion and investigation into the direct cost of a regimen for the patient.

Q. Where are the NCCN Evidence Blocks™ published?

NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks™ are separate publications from the complete library of NCCN Guidelines. NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks™ are currently available on NCCN.org/evidenceblocks at no cost to registered users.

Q. What is the timeline for publication of NCCN Evidence Blocks™ in all NCCN Guidelines?

NCCN intends to publish NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks™ for systemic therapies in all major cancer types by the end of 2016, with the entire library publishing by the end of 2017. Following publication of the NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks™ for systemic therapies, NCCN intends to publish NCCN Evidence Blocks™ for radiation oncology and imaging, followed by surgical interventions recommended within the NCCN Guidelines.

Q. How can I request a change to the NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks™?

NCCN Guidelines users can submit data to accompany a request for change or update to the NCCN Guidelines at any time.

Q. What educational materials are available for users of NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks™?

Further information about NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks™ can be found at NCCN.org/EvidenceBlocks. Information on this page includes comprehensive background for the publication and use of NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks™, as well as a user guide and the following recordings:

- October 2015 Press Conference–NCCN Guidelines with NCCN Evidence Blocks: A View of the Patient-Empowered Cancer Conversation
- The NCCN Value Initiative: Using NCCN Evidence Blocks™ in Clinical Decisions
- Patient Advocacy Summit: Value in Cancer Care – Patient Perspectives