The purpose of this guide is to help patients and families find sources of information and support. This list is meant to provide links to authoritative, up-to-date information sources for patients, families, and caregivers.

The materials in this guide can be found at the Patient Education Resource Center (PERC) in the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center B2 lobby. Visit us online at: http://www.mcancer.org/support/learning-about-cancer/education-resource-center

What are Online Communities?

- Online Communities are electronic discussion groups that focus on particular topics. People subscribing to an online community may read all the messages that are sent by other members, and any messages that they send to the group are read by all other subscribers.

- There are over one hundred online communities discussing issues relating to cancer. Most of them are devoted to specific cancer types, but others revolve around issues, such as survivorship, coping, caregiving etc.

- The Association of Cancer Online Resources (http://www.acor.org/) hosts a large number of cancer online communities. The rest are hosted by a number of other different associations. Associations focusing on a type of cancer many times will host online communities focusing on that specific cancer.

How to locate cancer Online Communities?

- American Cancer Society
  http://www.cancer.org/treatment/supportprogramsservices/onlinecommunities/
  Provides information on Online Communities provided by the American Cancer Society.

- Association of Cancer Online Resources
  http://www.acor.org/
  This page includes a list of online communities to join.

- CancerCare
  http://www.cancercare.org/support_groups
  Provides links to their Online Support Groups.
• Cancer Support Community
  Provides information about their online support community.

• Cancer.Net
  Provides information about Online Communities and includes links of where to find groups on the web.

**Why join an Online Community?**

- **Online Communities** provide an easy and direct way to connect with other people coping with similar issues and circumstances. They are a good source in which to learn coping strategies with both the physical and psychological aspects of cancer.

- Physical support groups meet on specific time intervals in specific geographic locations. In contrast, electronic discussion groups operate around the clock and are accessible to anyone with a computer and an Internet connection.

**Issues to consider before subscribing to an Online Community**

- Keep in mind that the information exchanged in online communities is anecdotal, it is not scientifically proven. Please check the accuracy of the information with your physician prior to making any decisions on medical treatment.

- Do not compare yourself or your loved one to other patients discussed on the list. Every cancer patient has a unique situation and a different set of circumstances.

- Just like support groups, email discussion groups are not for everyone. Some messages may be discouraging or upsetting.