Denise Soltow Hershey
PhD, RN, FNP-BC

Dr. Hershey’s research focuses on self-management of multi-morbidities in older adults, specifically patients with diabetes and cancer. Patients with multiple comorbidities are likely to prioritize one condition over another, increasing their risk for developing complications, having higher symptom burden and poorer overall quality of life. Cancer patients with diabetes have been shown to have higher mortality rates and are more likely to be hospitalized while receiving treatment for their cancer.

Preliminary research by Dr. Hershey has shown individuals with diabetes will decrease the amount of diabetes self-management activities they perform while undergoing chemotherapy for a solid tumor cancer or lymphoma. The areas reported to be most impacted were diet, exercise, and blood glucose management. Many patients reported issues with hyperglycemia while undergoing chemotherapy. This decrease in self-management and higher glycemic levels which occur while undergoing chemotherapy may contribute to the higher mortality and complication rates patients with both cancer and diabetes experience.

An additional research interest of Dr. Hershey involves the care management and coordination for patients with multi-morbidities. Specifically the development of a care management/coordination role utilizing advanced practice nurses to assist patients in their ability to better self-manage all of their comorbidities.

The long-term goal of Dr. Hershey’s research is to further examine the factors that may impact health related outcomes in adults with diabetes, cancer and other comorbidities, which would lead to the development of intervention research that can enhance and improve the care and outcomes for patients with multi-morbidities.