

DATA & ANALYSIS

Foundational and Advanced Strategies to Expand Access

Survey Implications

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<https://www.chartis.com/insights/foundational-and-advanced-strategies-expand-access>

Doubling down on ambulatory patient access is more critical than ever for cancer centers striving to attract patients in the post-COVID environment and retain and serve a growing patient population. Based on findings from our recent survey of 21 cancer care programs and our experience working with a variety of cancer care programs and centers across the country, we have identified a number of foundational and more advanced strategies that cancer care centers can employ to increase access and improve patient experience in their organizations. These strategies are:

- Expand Visit Pathways
- Optimize Patient Service
- Maximize Existing Capacity
- Establish Structure and Leadership to Support Access Goals

Expand Visit Pathways

1. Continue to employ and expand a range of modalities (including virtual provider visits and remote monitoring/case management) to make it easier and more convenient for patients to access needed information and services.
2. Hardwire virtual visits into the regular workflow to ensure a more permanent meaningful option.
3. Establish an urg-i-care center or extended hours clinic to make accessing care more convenient for patients.
4. Develop a remote second opinion program that both efficiently provides a needed service and “saves” on-site appointment slots for patients who likely require treatment at the cancer center.

Optimize Patient Service

1. Assess scheduling and other pre-visit process steps from the patient's perspective to prioritize areas that require workflow redesign. For instance, consider how easy or difficult and time consuming it is for patients to schedule multiple services across departments (e.g., clinic, pathology and radiation) and which process steps delay scheduling (e.g., records collection).
2. Establish appropriately aggressive access goals to set expectations and raise performance levels.
3. Offer navigation services with initial intake and support to assist the patient with accessing services across different departments.
4. Evaluate current records collection processes to identify ways to streamline the process.

Maximize Existing Capacity

1. Integrate APPs appropriately into the care model in order to leverage oncologists and increase access.
2. Develop a survivorship program to more efficiently support existing patients and increase ability to accommodate newly diagnosed patients.
3. Focus on cancelation/bump rate reduction and provider template optimization to increase capacity for new and existing patients.

Establish Structure and Leadership to Support Access Goals

1. Routinely monitor a comprehensive set of access metrics to understand current performance and gaps against goals.
2. Establish a leadership structure — inclusive of physician leaders — to monitor access performance, actively address issues and oversee access initiatives.
3. Establish expectations for provider time in order to expand capacity and optimize utilization of provider time.

Meeting patient need for efficient access to cancer care will be critical for cancer center and health system leaders — both through tried-and-true approaches, and through new channels and modalities that address the complexities of care delivery in our current environment. Even before the pandemic, the need for expanded access was well documented — with long wait times to see providers, a growing shortage of oncology providers and an increasing volume of patients requiring survivorship care. Post-pandemic, organizations will need to approach their access initiatives with purpose and intention to ease the path for patients to establish and complete needed care.

Enabling Cancer Care Access to Meet Patient Need

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Sue Fletcher, RN
Senior Partner



Kelley D. Simpson
Director and Chartis Oncology Solutions
Co-Leader