

From care barriers to a frictionless patient experience:

An NCI cancer center launches a navigation program

The vision

An NCI-designated cancer center sought to provide greater access to care and create a frictionless patient experience. Launching an institution-wide navigation program helps reduce barriers like lengthy wait times, financial clearance, and excessive patient touchpoints. It can also grow community reach, drive higher impact research breakthroughs, and set new standards for high-value cancer care.

Co-creating the solution

To ensure every patient's individualized needs are met throughout their cancer journey, the organization sought to define standard navigation functions, key intervention points where the journey is often complicated for patients, and the role of navigators.

Chartis evaluated existing navigation efforts and found varying patient experiences and levels of support throughout a patient's journey, depending on the disease site and sub-specialties. For example, one specialty used credentialed oncology nurse navigators while other specialties leveraged advanced practice providers (APPs).

Chartis created a new nurse navigator role, identified priority intervention points, established standard operating procedures, and delineated the nurse navigator function from other nurse roles. This was piloted in 4 disease sites to refine the design based on performance results and patient and care team feedback. The pilot also informed workforce sizing refinements and the organization structure required to scale the navigation model enterprise wide.

Common questions organizations must consider for new navigation programs:

- How does this differ from our current navigation efforts?
- How does a navigator differ from APPs, nurses in an access center, and clinic nurses?
- Does a navigator have to be a nurse?
- How will it impact the care team structure?
- How many navigators will we need and to whom will they report?
- What is the expected ROI?

Transformation in action

Learn

Study existing navigation roles and efforts relative to best practice

Build

Design and prepare organization for a comprehensive pilot

Activate

Launch demonstration to test and refine navigation program

Measure

Summarize performance metrics, surveys, and learnings

Scale

Size program staffing needs and build business case

Transform

Create navigation playbook and training to scale

Believe in better

The pilot defined 13 distinct and standardized navigation intervention points, as well as 5 navigation functions—financial, intake, treatment, inpatient, and international—that met the diverse patient needs. Pilot results included increasing new patient appointment conversion and retaining more patients for treatment. Growth in patient retention increased earnings and demonstrated a very significant positive return. Most profound was the impact on patient experience. Every navigated patient had a dedicated nurse proactively reaching out to them based on the defined intervention points along their cancer journey and available for answering questions, as needed.

“A robust navigation program is one of those gems that dramatically improves patient experience while delivering an undeniable return on investment in the form of more patients staying with the organization for care, all while more closely aligning clinical resources to top of license scope of practice.”

—Melissa McCain, Senior Partner, Chartis

Meaningful outcomes

The navigation pilot increased cancer services utilization and patient experience.

23%

increase in conversion rate compared to non-navigated sample

11%

increase in retention rate compared to non-navigated sample

98%

recommendation of the program to a friend or family member

Building to better

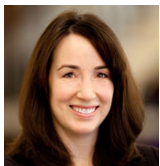
Offering navigation services will:

Increase conversion of new patient appointments and retention for treating patients.

Give patients a personalized, concierge experience to meet their varying needs.

Promote care teams to work at top of license.

Authors



Melissa McCain

Senior Partner

mmccain@chartis.com



Hunter Hayes

Associate Partner

hhayes@chartis.com



Emma Mayville

Engagement Manager

emayville@chartis.com

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