

ALLIANCE TO ADVANCE PATIENT-CENTERED CANCER CARE

The Georgia Cancer Center for Excellence at Grady Health System (GCCE)

Implementing nurse navigation in a safety net health system

Health System & Policy Changes



Patient
Navigation



As a safety net hospital, the GCCE at Grady provides care to all individuals in their service area, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. In general, patients served by safety net hospitals have fewer resources, face increased barriers to care, and bear a greater burden of disease than patients from other clinical centers. Recognizing these unique patient needs, leaders at Grady implemented navigation services by RNs to help guide patients through what can be a complex and fragmented cancer care delivery system. Through their work with the Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care, Grady has employed several effective strategies to bring about long-lasting system-level changes to expand and improve patient navigation.

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I've seen those navigators and they're that conduit between the patient and the physician – they're the ones that really explain to the patient, 'hey, this is what's going on with you.'

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Effective Strategies

- ✓ Integrating navigators into clinical care team
- ✓ Embedding navigators in community clinics
- ✓ Expanding EMR access for navigators
- ✓ Including navigators in EMR redesign
- ✓ Adding navigators to tumor conferences
- ✓ Presenting leaders with a business/financial case for navigation services



Health System and Policy Changes

- ✓ Nurse navigator job code and formal position created within Grady Health System
- ✓ Funding secured to add two new nurse navigator positions
- ✓ Customization of EMR to include patient navigation dashboard, flowsheet to track patient encounters, and automated messaging to navigators when patients are hospitalized or visit the ER
- ✓ Formal agreement with Susan G. Komen to fund breast cancer imaging navigator during screening and imaging phases
- ✓ Outcomes of navigation (e.g. decreased time to treatment) included in program quality goals
- ✓ A social determinants of health screening has been implemented at the cancer center and throughout ambulatory settings



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You know, with a lot of our patients, there are just a lot of social and economic barriers that they're facing. So, having [a navigator] who's also helping address those issues, sometimes that's almost as important.

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