$4.2M in Grants for Cancer Patient Navigation to Hospitals Across the U.S.

The American Cancer Society awards the funding to 14 health systems to enhance oncology patient navigation.

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The American Cancer Society (ACS) has awarded $4.2 million in multi-year grants for patient navigation programs to 14 health systems to enhance oncology patient navigation and address barriers to individualized, timely and equitable access to care for cancer patients and their families. Each of the health systems selected will receive $300,000.

Sponsorship for this initiative was led by the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, along with Bristol Myers Squibb. Additional sponsors include Daiichi Sankyo and other funders.

Patient navigation is one of the only evidence-based interventions to eliminate health disparities and improve health equity in cancer care. Patient navigators help guide patients through health care systems with the resources they need. Navigation is a crucial component of cancer care, from prevention through treatment and survivorship. By providing individualized assistance to patients, families and caregivers, navigation ensures high-quality health and psychosocial care, creating positive health outcomes for patients.

“ACS is committed to advancing high-quality cancer care through capacity building and support for innovative, sustainable models of oncology patient navigation,” said Dr. Arif Kamal, chief patient officer at ACS. “Patient navigation is a crucial component in our commitment to ensuring everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, find, treat and survive cancer.”

The 14 health systems awarded patient navigation grants are:

- HIMA San Pablo Oncologico-Caguas, Caguas, Puerto Rico
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

- VCU Massey Cancer Center, Richmond, Virginia
- The University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- University Of Alabama Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama
- Harris Health System, Houston, Texas
- Boston Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts
- Montefiore Einstein Cancer Center, Bronx, New York
- Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, Seattle, Washington
- City of Hope, Los Angeles, California
- The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
- Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois
- Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah
- University of Colorado Denver, Aurora, Colorado

Data shows the customized care provided through patient navigation programs decreases hospitalizations and intensive care unit admissions, improves timely diagnostic follow-up. Additionally, patient navigation increases scheduled appointment arrivals, adherence to recommended cancer screening and the likelihood treatment is initiated within 30 to 60 days from diagnosis.

“The ideal outcome for patient navigation grants is to identify best practices that impact patient

outcomes," said Dr. Karen E. Knudsen, CEO of the American Cancer Society and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN.) "Research shows that cancer patients who are navigated have improved survival, as well as access to advanced care like clinical trials, and services like genetic testing and palliative care. Navigation often results in increased screening and patients receiving treatment sooner, which improves the quality of life for cancer patients. As an organization, our biggest opportunity to impact patient navigation is through policy change and reimbursement."

Janssen Research & Development, LLC and other sponsors did not have input into the selection criteria and how the grant funds are to be used, and ACS had the final decision in the selection of the grantees.

For more than 30 years ACS has been a leader in establishing patient navigation as a path to ensuring access to quality care across the cancer continuum. Six additional sites will be approved when funding becomes available.

Learn more about the National Navigation Roundtable here: https://navigationroundtable.org/

Access the free the National Navigation Roundtable supplement here: https://acsjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/10970142/2022/128/S13

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