

## Cancer Navigation Program

### Program Description

The Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF) is a national 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides case management services and financial aid to individuals with chronic, life-threatening and debilitating illness, including cancer.

The Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value (Florida Alliance) is also a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that serves as Florida's only business coalition on health. The Florida Alliance's mission as a research and education organization is to achieve better care and lower cost by replacing the current volume-based purchasing model of care with one based on quality, patient safety, increased care coordination and communication. This mission is accomplished through the participation of employers in demonstration projects like the Cancer Navigation Program being submitted for the PBMI Excellence Award for innovation in care management.

The Florida Alliance CEO Karen van Caulil met the PAF CEO Alan Balch when they served on a national panel discussion about what constitutes quality in cancer care. Dr. Balch suggested to the audience that day that "high quality health care is not just about treatment. It is about a care plan that considers challenges to daily life – transportation, housing, food security, employment, child care and self-care." At the time, the Florida Alliance was working with one of their employer members, a large school district, to find ways to address these same challenges to ensure that plan members with cancer were able to access needed care. A pilot project had been undertaken to embed a navigator in the employer's benefits department and the top issues of concern being addressed by the employees with cancer were affording and accessing transportation, housing, food, child care and maintaining employment. The employees were largely unaware of the array of benefits and resources being offered by the employer or those available in the community.

From that initial meeting of the CEOs onstage, the Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value and the Patient Advocate Foundation came together to create an innovative, employer-based benefit program designed to help employees and their dependents more effectively navigate their cancer treatment journey by providing insightful and proactive benefit education, making connections to the social and practical community resources they are eligible for but may not be aware of, and providing critical, responsive support for specific access to care and financial barriers that impact and impair their ability to access and afford care.

The goals of the program are:

- To improve employees' understanding and utilization of their benefits
- To reduce financial and emotional stress
- To have a positive impact on employee productivity and satisfaction
- To improve access and adherence to care

Serving as a complement to the medical case management programs offered by both the health plan and the provider, the Cancer Navigators are trained professionals, and a trusted resource with the ultimate goal of helping patients overcome physical, emotional, social and financial barriers to receiving timely cancer treatment.

The Cancer Navigator provides support in the following areas:

- Proactive benefit education, navigation and empowerment
- Community resource navigation and enrollment
- Benefit utilization navigation and intervention
- Responsive intervention and solutions for specific access to care and financial issues faced by the cancer patient and their family.

This program is provided as an offering by the employer to eligible plan members. In order to be eligible for the program, the individual must be enrolled in the employer sponsored group health insurance plan as an employee, spouse or dependent and must have a diagnosis of cancer. The program is sponsored by the employer and all the services are provided to the employee free of charge.

Individuals accessing the program are assigned a personal Cancer Navigator who will provide education, navigation and hands-on interventions throughout the cancer experience. There is no limit on the number of times assistance can be requested from the Cancer Navigator.

Attached to this submission is a "Schematic of Cancer Navigation Program." This schematic shows how the individual accesses the program and how the Cancer Navigator responds. Of note is the evaluation stage of the program with follow up at 3 months and 6 months post-resolution of all issues the cancer patient is facing.

## **Achieved Outcomes**

We are currently undertaking a demonstration project with two large employers in the Orlando area. The preliminary results and two case studies are included in the attached "Cancer Navigator Preliminary Results" document and are very encouraging. We plan to expand the number of employers in the demonstration project in 2020 and develop a coalition business model to roll out to Florida's sister coalitions.

## **Lessons Learned**

What we know is that privacy is important to individuals. They appreciate having an anonymous, non-judgmental support outside the work setting. Also, working during cancer treatment is important to the employee. It can provide self-identity, a support system, financial stability and a sense of normalcy.

Communicating a new benefit to employees is a challenge for employers. We are finding that the approach one employer in the demonstration project is taking to connect their plan members to the program is more effective and timelier than the approach of the other. The more effective approach to date is to communicate the program through an onsite health center team and make a "warm hand off" to the Cancer Navigator. The onsite health center is an advanced primary care medical home and the care team is alerted immediately when a cancer diagnosis is made. At that time, the newly diagnosed cancer patient is made aware of the program in a face to face appointment at the center and the patient is encouraged to contact the Cancer Navigator while at the center. The other, somewhat less effective approach is through reliance on communication vehicles like the company newsletter, email and social media, and as a link on the employer's wellness portal. We are working to find additional ways to effectively promote the program for employers that do not have an onsite health center. We are meeting with all the oncology practices in Orlando to make them aware of this important program and the employers participating.

## **Supplemental Documentation**

Please see the attached supplemental documentation mentioned above – the schematic of the program and the preliminary results.