Gastrointestinal (GI) cancer is the second most frequent cancer diagnosis in the United States, and the care for patients with GI cancer is multifaceted, with each clinical encounter impacting patients’ overall experience. Patients and families often navigate this complicated journey on their own with limited resources and knowledge; therefore, innovative, patient-centered, and quality-focused programs must be developed. The purpose of this article is to discuss the development of GI nurse navigators (NNs) and the important role they have in providing coordinated evidence-based cancer care and in the benchmarking of quality metrics to allow more transparency and improve GI cancer care. This article provides a foundation for developing a GI NN role within the context of a newly developed multidisciplinary GI cancer program, and identifies the importance of tracking specific quality metrics. This innovative model is useful for healthcare organizations and nursing practice because it identifies the importance of a nurse in the navigator role, as well as highlights the numerous functions the NN can provide to the GI multidisciplinary team and patients.

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