Partnership and Empowerment Program: A Model for Patient-Centered, Comprehensive, and Cost-Effective Care

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The Partnership and Empowerment Program model offers a comprehensive, patient-centered, and cost-effective template for coordinating care for underinsured and uninsured patients with cancer. Attention to effective coordination, including use of internal and external resources, may result in decreased costs of care and improved patient compliance and health outcomes.

Program Development

The Partnership and Empowerment Program builds on the PADP to include elements of patient navigation (Paskett, Harrop, & Wells, 2011), and fosters cooperation between the patient and the Partnership and Empowerment Program team from the point where treatment begins through the end of treatment. The Partnership and Empowerment Program is not a traditional linear model. Instead, it has a circular, ongoing flow that assumes patient needs are constantly changing (see Figure 1).

The pretreatment appointment is the first step of the process. In it, the patient is assessed by the Partnership and Empowerment Program team prior to initiation of therapy. The patient and the program team work collaboratively to identify and address patient needs through efficient coordination of care, education regarding treatment, psychosocial support, and resource referrals (Institute of Medicine, 2008; Watson, 2006). The program team was able to expand the scope of available professional services by focusing on internal and external resources (see Figure 2).

Active patient participation results from patient empowerment to engage in self-care and plan of care development while adapting to the cancer diagnosis, treatment, and the medical environment. As a result, the patient is more informed, expectations of the patient and the program team are clearer, and the patient is better equipped to adhere to the care plan. The Partnership and Empowerment Program is a mission-based service that links well with the hospital's mission and vision by emphasizing quality and efficiency.

The hospital continues to support the Partnership and Empowerment Program because the proactive interventions are economically advantageous: Patients appreciate the financial benefit from linking them with patient-assistance funding, and the patient and team collaboration substantially reduces the financial losses typically seen in this population, including unnecessary emergency room and acute inpatient visits. For scheduled patient visits, nursing productivity is maximized because patients come to scheduled visits prepared (e.g., with laboratory work results, necessary home prescriptions) and chemotherapy orders have been reviewed for questions.

Limited resource coordination in the private office setting is related to the lack of a billing structure to support preventive coordination of those resources. Because the hospital will be caring for the patients regardless of insurance status, the Partnership and Empowerment Program helps to minimize the institution's financial losses.