

Alliance for Equity in Cancer Care

an initiative funded by Merck Foundation



Patient navigation

Designed to move individuals through the complex health care system, patient navigation is a comprehensive care intervention that guide patients from prevention and early detection to survivorship. Navigation includes qualified health professionals and trained lay personnel to minimize barriers for timely screening and diagnosis, cancer care and to help identify resources needed during and after cancer treatment.

Patient navigation helps to:

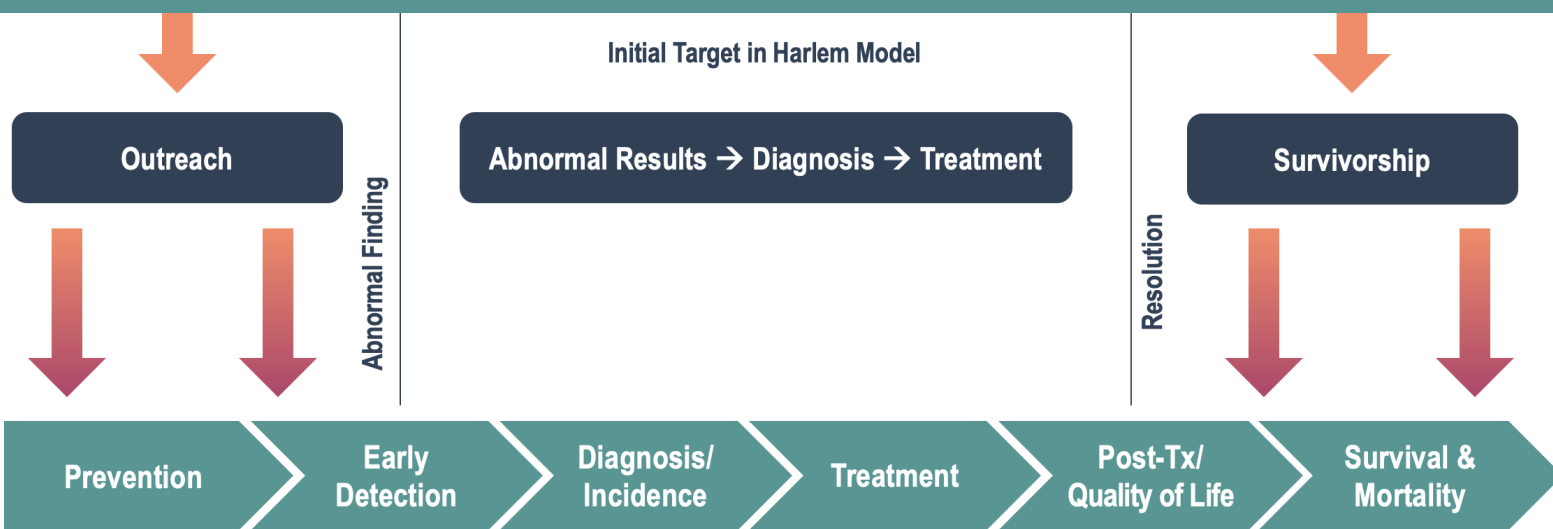
- Increase access to screening, care and follow-up
- Educate patients on treatment options
- Promote psychosocial support services
- Coordinate care among specialty providers
- Mitigate social drivers of health that may prevent patients from receiving or continuing care

70%

With patient navigation, the 5-year survival rate rose from 39% to 70% for patients with low socioeconomic status.

Freeman HP, *Cancer*. 2015

NAVIGATION FRAMEWORK



Adapted from Freeman HP, *J Urban Health*. 2006

EFFECTS OF PATIENT NAVIGATION



REDUCED DISPARITIES

Underserved populations are often negatively affected by social drivers of health, impacting access to and completion of quality care or support services. This can lead to worsened patient outcomes.

Navigation can reduce disparities by:

- Facilitating prevention and early detection
- Increasing care access and coordination
- Enhancing cultural/linguistic competency



IMPROVED OUTCOMES

Patient navigation is shown to increase life expectancy of patients. These services have also been found to improve patient-reported outcomes, including patient satisfaction and cost effectiveness of care.

Navigation has been found to lead to:

- Decreased hospital readmission
- Increased treatment adherence
- Reduced psychological distress

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

NATIONAL POLICY

National laws and regulations may mandate qualifications or training required to carry-out patient navigation. In turn, this may affect hiring, funding and overall implementation.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Navigation requires significant coordination with health system leadership, as well as community partners, to align with existing institutional workflows and policies.

CARE TEAM/ PROVIDER

A lack of patient and provider communications may limit the effectiveness of navigation and ability to deliver timely and high-quality care services while addressing patient needs.

2012

This American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer established a standard in 2012 requiring every CoC-accredited cancer program to have a patient navigation service.