A Day in the Life of a Lay Patient Navigator

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The Avon Foundation Community Education & Outreach Initiative (CEOI)

GASCO Annual Meeting—August 27, 2011
Presentation Overview

• Racial disparities & breast cancer

• Program Overview
  ➢ Community patient navigator
  ➢ Clinic patient navigator
  ➢ Individual patient navigator

• My Breast Cancer Story
Breast Cancer & Race

The American Cancer Society reports:

• African American (AA) women have a 38% higher mortality rate from breast cancer than white women

• AA women are less likely than white women to survive 5 years after diagnosis: 77% vs. 88% respectively

• AA women tend to be diagnosed with more advanced stage disease as compared to white women

Source: American Cancer Society, 2009
Patient Navigation

• Strategy to improve breast cancer detection, treatment and care for underserved, uninsured and underinsured women

• Avon Foundation CEOI is a community based patient navigation program in metro Atlanta
Program Overview

- AVON Foundation Community Education and Outreach Initiative (CEOI) is a:
  - Community based program
  - Collaborative effort between
    - AVON Foundation
    - Emory Winship Cancer Institute
    - Grady Health System
    - Emory Rollins School of Public Health (RSPH)
Program Overview

- **Goals:**
  - Raise awareness about breast cancer
  - Increase mammography screening rates
  - Enhance the process of receiving prevention and treatment services at Grady Health System
- Seeks to give the Grady Avon Breast Center enhanced visibility and community recognition within Atlanta
- Works to build and maintain strong partnerships with local community based organizations (CBOs) that focus on breast health/cancer
Use of Lay Health Advisors

• A variety of different names
  ➢ Lay health workers, community health advisors/workers/advocates, natural helpers, promotoras, patient navigators

• Uses members from the target community to deliver health education

• Often used with marginalized populations
  ➢ Promote cultural competence
  ➢ Help address issues of distrust of health care system
  ➢ Inexpensive to recruit, train, and supervise
  ➢ May be used in a variety of different settings
Training Lay Health Advisors

- **Annual training**
  - Breast cancer statistics
  - How to host community events
  - How to interact with/support patients
  - How to manage stress/care for self

- **Bimonthly continuing education**
  - Variety of topics selected based on programmatic need & volunteer input
Program Volunteers

**Clinic Patient Navigators**
- Presence in the Grady Avon Breast Center Clinics
  - Make appointment reminder telephone calls
  - Provide support to patients who are first diagnosed

**Individual Patient Navigators**
- Emotional support before & after appointments
- Liaison between patients & social workers
- Encouragement to complete treatment

**Community Patient Navigators**
- Dedicated to raising awareness about the benefits of early detection
- Host and participate in breast health events
- Equipped with teaching tools
- Charged with identifying up to 5 women per event who are interested in getting a mammogram
A Day in the Life of an Avon Clinic PN

• Patient population: majority African American women who are underserved
• Interaction with medical team: viewed as an integral member of healthcare team; MDs respect the Clinic PNs
• Presence is requested when MD needs a chaperone with patient; accompanies MD in patient’s room & answers questions
A Day in the Life of an Avon Clinic PN

• As a Clinic PN, I CAN:
  ➢ serve as a living testimony that a breast cancer diagnosis is NOT a death sentence
  ➢ provide support to patients via kind, encouraging words, educational literature, and comfort items such as juice, crackers, & blankets

• As a Clinic PN, I CAN’T:
  ➢ make a diagnosis
  ➢ recommend treatment plans or modalities

Clinic PNs are NOT Doctors, Nurses, or Social Workers!!!
A Day in the Life of an Avon Clinic PN

• What enables me to be a successful Clinic PN?
  ➢ keeping a positive and encouraging attitude
  ➢ having a sense of humor
  ➢ being knowledgeable about various resources that may help patients such as support groups

• What barriers have I faced as a Clinic PN?
  ➢ not very many
  ➢ some patients don’t want to talk on the day that they are diagnosed
My Story

• 12 year breast cancer survivor

• I know that I am a success when a patient diagnosed with cancer leaves the clinic with a smile on her face as opposed to tears because she has had a conversation with me and because I have LISTENED to her fears and concerns.

• All patients deserve comprehensive & compassionate care, which includes a trained patient navigator that can provide support in a variety of ways.
2011 Community Patient Navigators
Patient Navigators at Work!!!
Many THANKS to …

- AVON Foundation
- Georgia Cancer Coalition
- Grady Health System
- Winship Cancer Institute
Questions