

Survivorship: Putting the Pieces Together

Avera Cancer Institute Mitchell's successes and lessons learned from providing an online, interactive platform for cancer survivors to access information about survivorship such as nutrition, advance care planning, advance directives, physical activities, and connect with other SD cancer survivors for peer support

Challenge

The Commission on Cancer recommends that a standard survivorship care plan be implemented in accredited cancer facilities. Avera Cancer Institute Mitchell identified that it can be difficult for survivors to access information on-site due to a long drive time or challenging weather conditions. The goal was to provide a web-based survivorship program for rural SD allowing them to access critical information about survivorship topics from home. One barrier to this type of project includes the elderly population's lack of online or computer service. One way to overcome this is to print a survivorship care plan at the clinic for those patients and begin to fill it out at the clinic.

Solution

The challenge of providing the survivors with a survivorship program they could access from anywhere was addressed by developing videos and a survivorship care plan available completely online. Avera Cancer Institute Mitchell utilized the Livestrong format as well as the Prescription for Living survivorship care plan which was recommended by the Comprehensive Cancer Program Quality of Life workgroup.

It took multiple departments and facilities to implement this project. Communication was very important in making sure the project ran smoothly and in a timely manner.

Summary

The project first began in January of 2014. The website went live on June 12, 2014 and a survey gathering user feedback on the web-based program has been available since July. The completion date was September 29, 2014.

The online videos provide important education for survivors. The online care plan allows Avera to coordinate patients' treatment between multiple health care providers and facilities. This produces a continuity of care that is important for all cancer survivors.

Cancer survivors are the ones who will benefit the most from this project as it provides them with vital information regarding their cancer treatment as well as what comes next once treatment is complete.

Avera Cancer Institute Mitchell's past policy was to provide all survivorship information in paper format. They will continue to review the responses to the updated website. Avera Cancer Institute Mitchell will work with the oncology service line to implement a system-wide web-based survivorship program.



Results

The response to the web-based program has been very positive. Staff members were very involved in helping produce the videos. The target audience also responded well when the website was demonstrated to them in person. Afterwards, Avera sent business card reminders to visit the website from home. The business cards were also given to all new patients at their first appointment with a brief explanation of the website and importance of survivorship. However, survey results remain low. This could be due to the fact that viewers of the website have the option to opt out of the survey. When following up with patients in the clinic, it has also come to our attention that many like the information and access; however, many patients do not use a computer.



Successes

During this nine month project, a major success was the debut of the new survivorship website at the National Cancer Survivors Day celebration. Approximately 75 people attended and they were all able to view the new videos available and watch a demonstration on how to navigate the website.

Short term goals include continuing to track the number of viewers that visit the website as well as the survey results to determine how effective the information and website is. As the results continue to come in, responses will be evaluated to determine the need for any changes to the website. Avera Cancer Institute Mitchell will continue to encourage survivors, their family, and friends to visit the website. Long-term goals will depend on the survey results. If they show a positive response, it is possible to make this a system-wide change.

Resources

www.avera.org/cancer-institute-mitchell/survivorship/
www.cancersd.com
www.goodandhealthysd.org

Local Contacts

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