



CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY MONTANA

Benefits in partnership with oncology medical team

The purpose of this collaboration is to enhance services for people diagnosed with cancer and their families beyond physical treatment, and include psychosocial support services to improve quality of life for patients and their family. Integrative, comprehensive services that help patients and their family manage the many challenges of the cancer experience during diagnosis, treatment, long-term survivorship and end of life. Recent research has found the following improvements related to cancer care and the costs associated:

- Patients with **depression have higher health care utilization** (33.66 visits vs. 18.8 visits for those without depression)
- Patients with breast cancer participating in a six-week cognitive-behavioral session, billed the health care system **23.5% less** than the control arm and a total of \$6,199 less over the course of the study (Simpson et al, 2001)
- Men with prostate cancer participating in group intervention **decreased health care contacts** from 10 to 4.4 over a 6-month period while the control group remained stable at 8 contacts (Pennebaker, 2000)
- According to Andersen et al. (2004, 2008, 2010), patients with breast cancer engaged in social and emotional intervention have significant benefits over those who do not:
 - 45% reduced risk of breast cancer recurrence
 - 56% reduced risk of breast cancer death
 - Median time to death was 3.2 years for the intervention arm and 1.7 years for the assessment arm demonstrating a 1.5 year increase in total life expectancy.
 - 41% reduced risk of death following recurrence for the intervention arm with immune indices significantly higher among those in the intervention arm
 - Increase in T-cell development
 - Decrease in anxiety
 - Increase in family support
 - Decrease in number of smokers
 - Fewer symptoms/toxicities from cancer treatment

A cooperative effort also assists in satisfying components of 2020 ACOS Commission on Cancer requirements for accreditation. Many of the following programs are accessible via the Virtual Community:

- a. **Standard 4.5: Palliative Care Services – on-site and off-site services are included with referral relationship**
 - i. Psychosocial support for patients and families is provided with over 50 programs each month offered free of charge. This includes education to manage pain and provide spiritual comfort.
 - ii. Bereavement support for families of patients who die are available each week at CSC.
- b. **Standard 4.6: Rehabilitation Care Services – on-site or by referral**
 - i. Lymphedema management education is provided at CSC
 - ii. Physical activity classes are provided for patients each week both during and after treatment.
 - iii. CSC provides resources to address identified barriers i.e. nutrition services, and psychosocial care – free of charge and accessible to all.

- c. **Standard 4.7: Nutrition Services**
 - i. Nutrition education is available to ensure patient awareness of, and access to services. At CSC, we hold cooking classes, seed-to-table organic garden program, as well as nutrition education.
- d. **Standard 4.8: Survivorship Program – offered on site or by referral**
 - i. CSC is a collaborative member of the Survivorship efforts across Montana
 - ii. *Take Charge: Reclaiming Wellness After Treatment* Curriculum is currently scheduled 6 times per year with ability to increase as the referrals require. This includes but is not limited to: distress screening specific to cancer survivors, seminars for survivors, nutrition education, psychological support, support groups, sexual dysfunction/health, physical education and programs.
- e. **Standard 5.2: Psychosocial Distress Screening**
 - i. Through affiliation with Cancer Support Community National, CSC provides the Cancer Support Source Distress Screening for each patient and caregiver that comes to CSC. This is a standardized, validated instrument with clinical distress alerts, as well as referral and follow-up care. This screening complements the tools used in the clinical setting to assure patients and caregivers are getting their needs met across the continuum of care.
- f. **Available to all patients, caregivers and children: Psychosocial Services**
 - i. Over 50 programs of support services are available each month, free of charge and accessible to all.
 - ii. Cancer Support Community is providing services for patients from the beginning of diagnosis, through treatment, into survivorship and through end of life. We meet individually with each person to develop and implement a personalized care plan for patients, and help them find support services that are appropriate for them. These services include programs that address the physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects of care.
- g. **Quality Improvement Process**
 - i. Cancer Support Community participates collaboratively with the medical team to do an annual community needs assessment that addresses program delivery as well as barriers to care for patients and caregivers.
- h. **Standard 8.1: Addressing Barriers to Care**
 - i. Each calendar year, CSC develops a Needs assessment in writing and/or focus groups to address: cancer patient satisfaction, unique features of the care continuum of concern, gaps in community resources, access to care, and psychosocial programs that are to be offered. This is cumulated and presented to the Cancer Committee each fall and aids the members to determine identification of barriers to address.

Opportunities:

- The opportunity lies at the time the Survivorship Care Plan is delivered to the patient. Cancer Support Community is a referral for each patient to receive the following through a curriculum called “*Take Charge: Reclaiming Wellness After Treatment*”:
 - A Distress Screening to identify areas of concern that include:
 - Pain and physical discomfort
 - Sleep habits

- Intimacy and sexual concerns
- Disruptions in work, school or home life
- Body Image
- Anxiety and fear levels
- Financial concerns related to care and health insurance
- Worry about family, children or friends
- Exercise and being physically active
- Feeling sad and depressed
- Finding meaning in life
- [This distress screening is also available for caregivers.](#)
- A six session program offered free of charge to address the concerns, as well as referrals in the community:
 - Exercise
 - Nutrition
 - Emotional and Social Difficulties
 - Medical Management
 - Short and Long Term Effects of Cancer Treatment
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Sexual Health & Intimacy
 - Getting Back to Work
- The Clinical Program Director of Cancer Support Community is available to provide one-on-one care and navigation for patients and their family. This is short-term, cancer-related counseling that is offered in person and via telehealth free of charge.