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Prostate cancer treatment and reimbursement dynamics are changing

The outlook for men with prostate cancer continues to improve. Treatments are available for all stages of prostate cancer, and treatment plans evolve as cancer progresses. As a result, the complexity of prostate cancer care is increasing.

Even With Treatment, Recurrent Prostate Cancer Often Progresses

- Expert guidelines (eg, the RADAR* group) support early and consistent imaging to identify metastatic disease as soon as possible. This is critical because there are treatments available that can prolong survival for men with mCRPC, and survival benefits are greatest when metastases are identified early.

Defining the Role of Patient Navigators in Prostate Cancer Care

Patient Navigators are an important part of the urology practice team. In many cases they are health care professionals (often nurses) whose primary focus is to assist patients, providers, and staff in bridging any gaps in the continuum of care. Patient Navigators can also improve the operational efficiency of the practice and decrease treatment barriers by providing streamlined communication, tools, and resources.

A skilled Patient Navigator plays an important role in ensuring that men at risk of prostate cancer progression are appropriately identified, monitored, and sent for assessment of possible disease progression (eg, timely identification of appropriate men for imaging), as well as assisting patients throughout their treatment journey.

With adequate training, Patient Navigators may become the central point of contact in coordinating communication with all urology group staff members. Navigators should have the appropriate skill set and relationships within the urology group to provide education around treatments, provide communication strategies, and follow-up.

*The Prostate Cancer Radiographic Assessments for Detection of Advanced Recurrence working group
Evidence Supporting Patient Navigation Benefits

Several studies have reported positive effects of patient navigation initiatives for the care of patients with various types of cancer—including benefits that could be extended to the care of men with advancing prostate cancer in the urology setting. Highlights include:

• A National Cancer Institute/Cancer Research Network study of expert opinions determined that patient navigation strongly facilitates high-quality cancer care, and a key means of improving patient-centered care from diagnosis through follow-up by providing access to information, delivering tailored information and support, promoting shared decision making, offering emotional support, tracking patient quality of life (QOL), and improving communication among providers.

• A meta-analysis reported that patient navigation significantly increased the probability of diagnostic resolution vs usual care among >10,000 patients with abnormal prostate, breast, colorectal, or cervical cancer screening tests.

• Studies of breast cancer patient navigation have reported that initiatives may:
  - Shorten time to treatment initiation and significantly increase rates of adherence to post-treatment surveillance.
  - Improve the efficiency of clinical services by ensuring that scheduled appointments are not missed, thus decreasing gaps in provider productivity.

• A study of patients with colorectal and breast cancer found that patients value navigation for the provision of emotional support, assistance with informational needs and problem-solving, and logistical coordination of cancer care. Navigation may help to improve cancer care outcomes by addressing fragmented, confusing, uncoordinated, or inefficient care.

Urology Practice Enhancement With Patient Navigation

The cost of caring for cancer patients is increasing, with the largest growth projected in the phase of continuing care for prostate and breast cancers. Meanwhile, the diagnosis and management of prostate cancer currently comprise a large percentage of patients seen in urology practices. It is important to note that reimbursement policies are changing to encourage the provision of comprehensive, high-quality care within practices. Thus, providing more complete, integrated care for men with prostate cancer (ranging from curative surgical or radiation intervention through care for advanced metastatic disease) is in line with expectations for improvements in care quality, value, and accountability, as well as optimal reimbursement (eg, via Medicare performance-based payment adjustments). Patient Navigators can play a key role in facilitating care that meets these rising standards in order to meet and exceed evolving reimbursement criteria.

Potential Advantages of Prostate Cancer Patient Navigation Programs in the Urology Setting

Prostate cancer treatment is increasingly complex. Offering comprehensive, coordinated advanced prostate cancer (APC) care retains patients within the urology practice, provides collaborative advantages, and streamlines management, allowing for an increased volume of care to be delivered.

Specific benefits resulting from a navigation program may include:

• Proactive identification of patients who should be evaluated for APC treatment
• Increased adherence to guidelines for prostate cancer treatment
• Optimized utilization and matching of medical resources to patients
• Enhanced education for patients regarding prostate cancer treatment options and urology group resources
• Improved communication between prostate cancer patients and urology clinicians
• Improved patient satisfaction metrics for the urology practice
• Long-term partnerships with patients and their caregivers around their prostate cancer care
Many urology practices are expanding to deliver comprehensive care by establishing Advanced Prostate Cancer Clinics (APCC)

As outlined previously, there are important factors prompting urology practices to evolve in order to deliver care that includes APC.

Steps Involved in Establishing an Effective APCC
Requires a team approach

**STEP 1**
Plan development and oversight come from collaborative administrative and clinical leadership

- Nonclinician Administrative Leader
- Physician Clinical Leader

- Develop a clear, specific patient identification model
- Establish specific treatment plans and referral paths
- Measure and communicate results

**STEP 2**
Operational success results from clinician commitment and patient navigation

- Clinical Expert
- Patient Navigator

- Patient Navigators play a pivotal role in the success of an APCC

Components of Successful APCCs Include:
- Patient identification protocols (eg, via electronic medical records [EMR], chart reviews)
- Clinical referral pathways
- Surveillance, lab, imaging, and treatment protocols
- Patient education and support programs
- Treatment coordination and scheduling
- Availability of advanced therapeutics (eg, immunotherapy, chemotherapy, secondary hormonal therapy, investigational therapy клинических испытаний)
- Availability of bone health therapies and medical procedures
- Financial processing (eg, benefit verification, preauthorization, coding/billing, patient assistance programs)
Key Responsibilities of a Patient Navigator

Patient Navigators play an important and multifaceted role

Once the administrative and clinical leaders have developed and communicated protocols and treatment paths for the practice, the Navigator plays a critical role in operationally delivering on this vision.

Key Patient Navigator Responsibilities

The responsibilities listed below represent some common tasks, but should be based on the established protocols and pathways within each practice.

IDENTIFY PATIENTS POTENTIALLY APPROPRIATE FOR APCC CARE

- Review records of all patients on hormone therapy
- May use chart reviews, EMR systems, and/or analytic software
- Flag when prostate-specific antigen rises despite current treatments

REFER PATIENTS FOR SPECIALIST FOLLOW-UP

- Often within the urology group

ORCHESTRATE FINANCIAL PROCESSING

- Preauthorizations
- Patient assistance programs

OVERSEE THE CARE COORDINATION PLAN

- Scheduling
- Infusions
- Adherence to treatment
- Counseling, education, provision of resources, ongoing communication, and responding to patient questions

ASSESS PATIENT SATISFACTION METRICS

- Increasingly important in evolving reimbursement dynamics
A stepwise framework for planning and executing a navigation program

**STEP 1**
Assess the following practice dynamics to establish the need for a patient navigation program:
- Are scanning, lab, and treatment protocols in place?
- Have referral pathways been established and agreed upon?
- Is there a point person for patient communications who is available to answer questions and provide guidance?

**STEP 2**
Gain support for navigation program from key leaders/departments/providers involved in the care of patients

**STEP 3**
Evaluate potential obstacles to implementation

**STEP 4**
Determine program scope, cost, training, and time frames

**STEP 5**
Implement pilot program:
- Identify or hire Patient Navigator
- Coordinate implementation plan with appropriate staff and providers
- Prepare resources, such as policies, procedures, training materials, posters, brochures, and forms
- Implement staff rollout, training for external/internal referrals, and navigation toolkit
- Track number of treatments used for APC, as well as patient adherence and overall satisfaction

**STEP 6**
Assess program effectiveness, share findings with stakeholders, and modify program accordingly
The following resources can be used to assist urology groups with the planning and implementation of patient navigation programs.

### Resources, Templates, and Tools*

- **JOB DESCRIPTION**
- **INTAKE FORM AND TRACKING TOOL**
- **WORKSHEET TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT**
- **PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY**
- **PROGRAM FLYER/STAND-UP DISPLAY COPY**
- **PRESS RELEASE**
- **PERSONAL TREATMENT PLAN TEMPLATE**
- **PORPUS PROSTATE CANCER QOL QUESTIONNAIRE**
- **PROSTATE CANCER PATIENT BROCHURE**

*Templates provided are for example only. Please work with your urology practice group to develop customized forms for use with your individual team and/or patients.

**The PORPUS questionnaire can be freely downloaded from [http://porpus.org](http://porpus.org).**
Position Description: Patient Navigator

Reports to: [Supervisor/MD/Practice Administrator]

Summary of Responsibilities:
The Navigator position is within the [division] located at [Urology Group X] in [City]. Using a combination of communication strategies, resources, and tools, the successful candidate will help to guide patients with prostate cancer to achieve optimal care continuity and outcomes. Key responsibilities of the Patient Navigator include:

- Identify and flag patients who may be appropriate for advanced prostate cancer care referral
- Help coordinate financial processes, such as billing/coding, insurance authorizations, and patient assistance programs
- Provide patient education/counseling, answer patient questions, address potential barriers to care, and link patient with resources
- Oversee patient care coordination plans, including scheduling treatments, tests, and other appointments
- Assess patient adherence and satisfaction measures

Minimum Qualifications:
- 3 years of experience in a clinical setting interacting collaboratively with medical teams; knowledge of environment and systems in which patients receive urology care
- Working knowledge of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) regulations
- Demonstrates ability to function independently in a goal-directed manner while communicating effectively with patient, family/caregivers, and provider at all levels
- Demonstrates sensitivity to patient/family belief systems, ethnicity, and culture, as well as socioeconomic background
- Detail-oriented, with excellent written, interpersonal, organizational, and computer skills

Preferred Qualifications:
- Nurse or degree in health care or human services or education-related field preferred
- Fluent in English [and language]

Duties:
- Quickly acquires and maintains strong knowledge of prostate cancer care resources and services to assist patients and their families/caregivers to manage decision-making processes, treatment regimens, and follow-up care
- Works closely with providers and staff to build communication, trust, and a shared commitment to serving patients across all urology group divisions
- Assists the Practice Manager and/or Medical Director in establishing and maintaining quality reporting, assessment of patient satisfaction, and adherence to care

*Templates provided are for example only. Please work with your urology practice group to develop customized forms for use with your individual team and/or patients.
Intake Form and Tracking Tool*

*Templates provided are for example only. Please work with your urology practice group to develop customized forms for use with your individual team and/or patients.

(Form to be completed with patient at initial visit)

Patient name: _____________________________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________________

Preferred method of communication:

☐ Telephone: ________________________________

☐ Text (mobile): ________________________________

☐ Email: ________________________________

If telephone is preferred, can voice messages be left?  ☐ Yes (circle phone number above)  ☐ No

Primary caregiver: ___________________ Relationship: ___________________________________________

Caregiver phone number: ________________________________

1. How was patient referred to navigation program?

☐ Physician ___________________ Name & department: ______________________________

☐ Hospital ___________________ Name: ______________________________

☐ Clinic ___________________ Name: ______________________________

☐ Nurse ___________________ Name & department: ______________________________

☐ Other ___________________ Description: ______________________________

2. What concerns might affect patient’s ability/likelihood of moving forward with his treatment plan and ongoing monitoring/follow-up?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

3. What are the patient’s expectations/wishes for the navigation program? How can the Navigator best help the patient?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Which methods are most preferred/helpful for the patient to learn new information (eg, about treatments, procedures)? Check all that apply.

☐ Reading  ☐ Watching video(s)

☐ Listening  ☐ Watching demonstration/tutorial

☐ Patient testimonials  ☐ Patient/product brochures

5. What are your favorite activities and hobbies?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
Use this form to help identify patient concerns/barriers at the initial visit and at each follow-up visit to assist with development of a plan of action and consultation/referral to appropriate providers, resources, or departments.

Patient name: _______________________________ Date: _______________________________

### Health Insurance/Financial Concerns

- [ ] No health insurance coverage
- [ ] Inadequate health insurance coverage
- [ ] Precertification problems
- [ ] Difficulty paying out-of-pocket costs
- [ ] Need for financial assistance from Medicaid/Medicare
- [ ] Difficulty paying bills/supporting basic needs
- [ ] Other: _______________________________________

Notes

### Transportation to/From Treatment

- [ ] Public transportation needed
- [ ] Private transportation needed
- [ ] Other: _______________________________________

Notes

### Communication/Cultural Needs

- [ ] Primary language other than English
- [ ] Inability to read/write
- [ ] Poor health literacy
- [ ] Cultural barriers
- [ ] Other: _______________________________________

Notes

### Treatment Management/Decision Making

- [ ] Issues with compliance (e.g., missed appointments, lack of follow-up)
- [ ] Needs help obtaining second opinion
- [ ] Does not understand/is confused about treatment plan and/or procedures
- [ ] Unsure/undecided about treatment options and/or next steps
- [ ] Insufficient information to make a decision
- [ ] Fear of procedure or treatment
- [ ] Needs/wants to talk to provider (physician, nurse, therapist, etc)
- [ ] Wants more information about: ____________________________________________________________
- [ ] Other: ________________________________________________________________
Plan of Action

Patient name: ________________________________

Date:_____________________________________

Reason for visit (circle): Initial visit or Follow-up

Visit purpose: ________________________________

Barrier(s)/concern(s) identified: ________________________________

Action(s) to be taken: ________________________________

Desired result(s): ________________________________

Resolution and date: ________________________________

Additional comments: ________________________________

(continued)
Please take a moment to complete this confidential questionnaire about your experiences with our group. Your feedback is greatly appreciated and will be used to evaluate and improve patient care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please rate each of the following:</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't know/ doesn't apply</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Navigator is friendly</td>
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<td>2. The Navigator is sensitive to my needs</td>
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<td>3. The Navigator has been easy to get in touch with</td>
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<td>4. The Navigator has answered all my questions</td>
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<td>5. The Navigator has helped to address my concerns</td>
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<td>6. The educational materials I have received have been helpful</td>
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<td>7. The Navigator has helped me to make decisions about my treatment</td>
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<td>8. I feel well informed about my treatment plan</td>
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<td>9. The doctor(s), nurse(s), staff, and Navigator are all on the same page regarding my care</td>
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<td>10. The Navigator has helped me to stay on track with my treatment/appointments</td>
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<td>11. I would recommend the Navigator to others</td>
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<td>12. I am satisfied with my overall experience at [Urology Group]</td>
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</table>

What suggestions do you have for improving patient care at [Urology Group]?
________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you have any additional comments?  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

If you would like to discuss your experiences and feedback, please provide your name and contact information:

Name  Preferred telephone number
________________________________________________________________________________________

Best day/time to reach you  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
Program Flyer/Stand-Up Display Copy*

*Templates provided are for example only. Please work with your urology practice group to develop customized forms for use with your individual team and/or patients.

[Urology group name/logo]

**The Patient Navigator can help you by:**

- Assisting with paperwork
- Answering your questions
- Helping to find solutions to barriers/difficulties related to your medical care
- Enhancing communication and coordination with various medical providers and staff
- Discussing your treatment options and plans
- Working with you to find the educational resources, tools, and support you need
- Streamlining and scheduling your health care appointments
- Partnering with you to create an appropriate follow-up plan, both for the short and long term

For more information, contact [name] at [phone/department/office].
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[DATE]

FOR MORE INFORMATION

[CONTACT NAME]
[CONTACT NUMBER]

[Urology Group]

ANNOUNCES A NEW PATIENT NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

We are pleased to announce the expansion of patient care services with the addition of a prostate cancer Patient Navigator program.

The Patient Navigator guides patients throughout their prostate cancer journey, including helping patients with paperwork, and supporting treatment decisions (including planning and coordinating appointments). The Navigator also provides patient education, helps to address barriers and difficulties with care, and connects patients with resources and support.

The goals of the program are to improve patient access, coordination, and continuity of care in order to optimize patient outcomes, and to enhance overall patient satisfaction.
**PERSONAL TREATMENT PLAN**

**Designed for:**

**Designed by:**

**HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS/CONTACT INFORMATION**

Patient Navigator:
Urologist:
Primary care provider:
Others:

**PATIENT CONCERNS/POTENTIAL TREATMENT BARRIERS**
(eg, insurance/financial, social/emotional, health/lifestyle, logistics/transportation)

**TREATMENT DESCRIPTION/NOTES**

Treatment – completed:

Treatment – ongoing:

Surveillance/other tests:

Lifestyle changes/goals:

**TREATMENT SCHEDULE**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Treatments/tests/appointments</th>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUN</th>
<th>JUL</th>
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**ADDITIONAL NOTES (EG, SIDE EFFECTS, ADHERENCE, NEXT STEPS)**
PORPUS Background: Patient ORiented Prostate Utility Scale\textsuperscript{13,14}

Research suggests that having patients fill out a quality of life (QOL) questionnaire before meeting with clinicians may help to improve patient-clinician communication about QOL issues.

PORPUS is a validated 10-item questionnaire that measures QOL for men with prostate cancer. It asks about symptoms that are common for prostate cancer, its treatments, and treatment side effects. The PORPUS offers a fast, reliable, and responsive means of assessing and tracking overall QOL in men with prostate cancer.

The PORPUS questionnaire can be freely downloaded from http://porpus.org. This website also contains additional details about the development and use of the PORPUS, including how to calculate scores.

The PORPUS Questionnaire

The questions on this page ask you about how you have been feeling. There are no right or wrong answers; please choose the statements that come closest to describing your experiences.

1. Pain and Disturbing Body Sensations (pain, hot flashes, painful swelling of breasts, nausea, drowsiness)
   Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.
   • No pain and no disturbing body sensations.
   • Mild pain or disturbing body sensations that do not limit any activities (for example: work, social, sexual, sleep).
   • Moderate pain or disturbing body sensations that limit a few activities.
   • Moderate to severe pain or disturbing body sensations that limit some activities.
   • Severe pain or disturbing body sensations that limit many activities.

2. Energy
   Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.
   • Very full of energy, lots of pep.
   • Fairly energetic, no limitation of activities (for example: work, social, sexual).
   • Generally low energy or pep that limits some activities.
   • No energy or pep at all. I feel drained, and many activities are limited.

3. Support from Family and Friends
   Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.
   • Most of the time feel supported by my spouse, family and friends.
   • Occasionally feel supported by my spouse, family and friends.
   • Rarely feel supported by my spouse, family, and friends.

4. Communication with Doctor (primary caregiver for prostate cancer, may be specialist or family doctor)
   Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two scheduled appointments.
   • Always able to express my concerns to my Doctor and get all the information or advice I need.
   • Most of the time, able to express my concerns to my Doctor and get all the information or advice I need.
   • Rarely able to express my concerns to my Doctor and get all the information or advice I need.
5. Emotional Well-Being

Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.

• Generally happy and free from worry, sadness, or frustration.
• A little worry, sadness, or frustration.
• Moderate worry, sadness, or frustration.
• Quite a bit of worry, sadness, or frustration.
• Extreme worry, sadness, or frustration.

6. Urinary Frequency (need to pass urine frequently during the day or night) and Urgency (difficulty delaying urination after the urge is felt to urinate, ability to “hold it”)

Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.

• No urinary frequency or urgency.
• A little urinary frequency or urgency, does not interfere with sleep or other activities (for example: work, social); no need to plan ahead.
• Some urinary frequency or urgency that interferes with sleep or other activities; may need to plan ahead.
• Quite a bit of urinary frequency or urgency; need to be near a bathroom most of the time.
• Extreme urinary frequency or urgency; need to be near a bathroom always.

7. Leaking Urine/Poor Bladder Control

Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.

• Never, under any circumstances leak urine or lose bladder control.
• On rare occasions, leak urine or lose bladder control, does not interfere with any activities (for example: work, social, sexual, sleep).
• Occasionally leak urine or lose bladder control, interferes with a few activities.
• A moderate amount of the time, leak urine or lose bladder control, interferes with some activities.
• Most of the time, leak urine or have poor bladder control, interferes with many activities.
• Require a clamp, catheter, or collecting bag because of leaking urine or poor bladder control.

8. Sexual Function (problems with achieving/maintaining an erection)

Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.

• Full erections sufficient for intercourse.
• Erections sufficient for intercourse, but some reduction in firmness.
• Erections sufficient for masturbation or foreplay only.
• Erections, but not firm enough for any sexual activity
• No erections at all.

9. Sexual Interest/Drive

Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.

• Normal amount of sexual drive and interest for you.
• A little decrease of sexual drive or interest for you.
• Moderate decrease of sexual drive or interest for you.
• Substantial decrease of sexual drive or interest for you.
• No sexual drive or interest.

10. Bowel Problems: Diarrhea, Rectal Discomfort (pain, burning or irritation) or Constipation

Please choose the statement that comes closest to describing you in the last two weeks.

• No diarrhea, rectal discomfort, or constipation.
• Occasionally have diarrhea, rectal discomfort, or constipation.
• Frequently have diarrhea, rectal discomfort, or constipation.
• Nearly always have diarrhea, rectal discomfort, or constipation.
A brochure is available to utilize with your patients with prostate cancer and their caregivers. Please contact UroGPO for more information on how to access a copy of this brochure.

Understanding Your Prostate Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment Options


