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A Team-Based Approach to Fundraising

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A Team-Based Approach to Fundraising

The Development Department at the Harrington Cancer Center (HCC) in Amarillo, Tex., is multifaceted. HCC has discovered that organizing marketing, education, outreach, and fundraising under "development" results in less duplication of effort and a more precise marketing approach.

"Every project we undertake, whether it be our annual direct mail campaign or a screening clinic, has the potential to help us develop fund resources, market our services to the community, and provide education," said Charlotte Rhodes, A.C.F.R.E., C.A.H.P., vice president of development.

Rhodes oversees a staff that includes a marketing/community relations director, an internal relations/education coordinator, and an area outreach coordinator. For every program that needs outside funding, Rhodes and her staff seek and establish educational, marketing, volunteer, and fund development commitments.

"Every development effort is a team-based approach," said Rhodes. When HCC arranges a screening clinic, for example, the area outreach coordinator sets schedules and consults with physicians about staffing requirements and referral issues. The marketing/community relations coordinator publicizes the event and organizes volunteers. A week prior to the clinic, the education coordinator may schedule a meeting to prepare participants for the screening.

A Development Council oversees the HCC Development Department. The Council meets monthly to advise and participate in fund development and donor recognition. Rhodes serves as staff advisor to the Council, which is made up of HCC staff and volunteers from the community. Council committees

include the area bank endowment, planned giving/major gifts, and annual giving. Circle of Friends, a nonprofit 501C3 membership organization that serves to raise money for the HCC, is also represented on the Council.

COORDINATING DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

A coordinated development effort is especially important for a cancer center affiliated with other hospitals, in this case five hospitals—High Plains Baptist Hospital, Northwest Texas Hospital, Texas Tech Medical School, Veterans Medical Center, and St. Anthony's Hospital. "Our BMT program, for example, is based in one hospital, while pediatric oncology is based in another," Rhodes explained. "Our organizational structure helps eliminate the potential for duplication of effort."

When coordinating a development effort for an HCC program based in an affiliated hospital, Rhodes collaborates with the hospital, which is often eager to let her take the lead in raising funds. In exchange, the affiliated hospital will make in-kind donations to projects, such as printing the program's promotional brochures in the hospital's in-house press shop.

According to Rhodes, the most crucial mistake a facility can make is running a development campaign that is not targeted. "Using targeted marketing and education strategies cuts down internal costs and helps HCC reach specific populations when raising funds and planning special events and projects," said Rhodes, who segments her mailing lists into specific populations and adjusts the marketing strategy to fit the audience. Purchasing a large all-inclusive mailing list is not an effective strategy for a direct mail piece, she advised. In a direct mail campaign for the breast cancer program,

for example, she targets first-time donors by including educational information about HCC's services. For previous donors, Rhodes will recognize their contributions and the specific outcomes of their donations. "We want donors to recognize that their gifts resulted in a positive end result, such as new mammography equipment." All gifts are recognized on "The Tree of Life," located at HCC's main entrance, and through annual events and publicity.

"The key to a successful development plan is to market your facility's differential advantage," Rhodes said. A facility must set itself apart from its competitors. "Find out what your competitors are not doing and do it yourself, or find out what they do and do it better."

A FUNDRAISING CIRCLE

Circle of Friends was established in 1982 to support the HCC and provide nonmedical support, such as money for rent, gasoline, and insurance premiums, to needy cancer patients and families. Circle of Friends began as a community-based support group that has since expanded to a network of support groups encompassing 15 neighboring communities in the Texas Panhandle, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Kansas.

Circle of Friends raises money through an annual membership drive that involves membership parties that take place in each of the area towns with organized chapters. A single membership is \$15, a family membership is \$25, and corporate membership is \$100. Currently Circle of Friends includes more than 2,000 families.

Funds are also raised through participation in the annual Race for the Cure sponsored by the Susan G. Komen Foundation for Breast Cancer Research. Circle of Friends

supports the pediatric oncology program through an annual Christmas card contest and sale. Additional funding is received from memorial gifts, donations, and other special events. In 1994 Circle of Friends raised more than \$80,000 from these projects.

Circle of Friends budgets \$24,000 a year to assist cancer patients and families with direct financial sup-

port and reserves more than \$20,000 a year in grants to the HCC for patient-related needs, such as new mammography equipment or patient lockers. Through funds raised by the Race for the Cure, Circle of Friends supports HCC's breast screening programs. Other areas of support include an apartment in Amarillo for the use of out-of-town cancer patients and

their families and scholarships and financial assistance for both a children's and parents' camp.

HCC donors are encouraged to participate on-site in the activities of the Center. "We rely on more than monetary donations from our community members," explained Rhodes. "We appreciate their active involvement as well." ■

The Don and Sybil Harrington Cancer Center is a freestanding, outpatient care cancer center located in the Harrington Regional

Medical Center complex in Amarillo, Tex. The Center provides comprehensive patient care, education, and research to the



people of the High Plains region. The Harrington Cancer Center Women's Center collaborates with High Plains Baptist Hospital to offer a breast screening program to Texas Panhandle businesses, corporations, and underserved rural and minority populations.

VITAL STATISTICS

- New analytic cancer patients seen each year: 1,977
- Affiliated with NSABP, RTOG, and SWOG
- Managed care penetration in Texas: 14.4 percent (1994)

PATIENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- The patient chemotherapy teaching program is led by members of the supportive care team.
- Through grants from Avon, the American Cancer Society, and the Texas Department of Health, the Women's Program offers low-cost and in some cases free breast and cervical screening to economically deprived women.
- HCC physicians and professional staff participate as faculty of Living with Cancer, an outreach support series that focuses on quality of life issues.
- Staff for HCC's cancer hotline provide callers with information about cancer and refer them to appropriate resources.