



SITE VISIT 3

CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center

CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center, Kearney, Nebraska, is a 268-bed not-for-profit community hospital located in a rural setting.

The cancer center provided treatment to 496 new patients in 2014. Racial and ethnic minorities made up 5 percent of the cancer patient population. CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center is accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC). The site visit involved a multidisciplinary team, including:

- The director of Oncology Services
- The oncology services manager
- A patient and family counselor
- A cancer nurse navigator
- An oncology nurse practitioner
- The manager of Behavioral Health Business Operations.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center uses the NCCN Distress Thermometer and Problem List; inpatients complete only the Distress Thermometer. The cancer center has included additional items under the “Other Problems” section: driving, speaking, swallowing, weakness, and chores and shopping to assist with cancer rehabilitation screening. A positive screen is considered to be a score of 4 or above. The screening tool is available in Spanish.

The navigators have created a resource center with educational handouts to match every problem on the NCCN Problem List. Many of these handouts are NCI teaching sheets. CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center has many resources available to patients, including:

- Financial assistance for breast and cervical cancer patients through the Visiting Nurse Association in Nebraska
- Kearney Tackles Cancer, a local philanthropic program that provides some financial assistance for patients with any cancer diagnosis
- Pastoral care
- STAR® Program, a cancer rehabilitation program
- Counseling
- Tobacco cessation
- Pet therapy
- Complementary therapies (aromatherapy, massage therapy)
- Genetic counseling



- Support groups
- Cognitive therapy
- A public benefit specialist
- Richard Young Outpatient Clinic, a full-service psychiatric outpatient/inpatient department of CHI Health Good Samaritan.

CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center also offers some programs in conjunction with the local American Cancer Society, specifically Look Good Feel Better and volunteer drivers. The local Area Agency on Aging provides transportation and housecleaning assistance for cancer patients over 60 years of age.

DISTRESS SCREENING PROGRAM

CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center started developing its distress screening program in 2009 after the site participated in the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Community Cancer Centers Program (NCCCP). Screening is accomplished at different touch points. Outpatient radiation oncology patients are screened at their first visit to Radiation Oncology and at the first visit of each successive month. In the chemotherapy infusion center, patients are screened at their first visit and at each subsequent chemotherapy visit—but not more than weekly. For inpatients with cancer, the cancer center nurse navigators complete screening with the Distress Thermometer (without the Problem List) sometime during the admission process.

Front desk staff members give outpatients a paper-and-pencil NCCN Distress Thermometer and Problem List, which patients complete while waiting for clinical care. The completed screen is scanned into the EHR. Nurse navigators receive the paper tool and enter patients' responses into the psychosocial section of the EHR. For a score of 4 to 6 on the Distress Thermometer, the navigator refers the patient to the cancer counselor (or other appropriate resource). For a score of 7 to 10, the navigator refers the patient to the cancer counselor (or other appropriate resource) and attempts to arrange contact on the same day.

Nurse navigators see all patients at their first visit to Radiation Oncology and their first visit to the infusion center; the navigators receive an alert through the EHR. Patients are educated about distress screening by the navigator, including the fact that screening will be done approximately once a month. Navigators work to normalize emotional concerns for patients. The navigators give new patients a brochure about navigation and educational handouts, as appropriate, from the resource center. As stated previously, CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center has patient handouts for every problem listed in the distress screening tool.

The Oncology Services manager educates staff about distress screening during their orientation; this education is an item on the orientation checklist.

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center obtained a NCCCP grant through its parent organization, Catholic Health Initiatives. An ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) grant from the NCCCP funded a tobacco cessation counselor position for three years. The cancer center used this time to demonstrate the need for a counselor. When the grant ended, the position transitioned to a patient and family counselor role, which includes tobacco cessation work and is now institutionally funded. CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center has also developed philanthropic funding streams by partnering with local agencies and high schools. The cancer center has been able to expand from one to three cancer nurse navigators. CHI Health Good Samaritan Cancer Center has identified four current and future initiatives:

1. To move to a tablet format for distress screening with automatic entry of data into the EHR.
2. To set up alerts in the EHR as to when distress screening should be done.
3. To create additional space for patient consultations in the clinical setting.
4. To add the services of a dedicated cancer center financial counselor and a social worker.