

Cancer Outreach – Partnering with Community Resources

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The Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center advocates a proactive approach to good health maintenance through cancer awareness and education programs. Collaborating with community resources has contributed to the sustainability and growth potential of our outreach program. Physicians and staff at Brody School of Medicine of East Carolina University, Physicians East, P.A., Carolina Women's Physicians, Pitt County Public Health Center, Eastern Urological Associates, Eastern Radiologists Inc., Pitt County Care and HealthAssist have volunteered countless hours to our cancer screenings and awareness programs. The investment of time and talent from our medical community demonstrates a commitment to caring – a factor that is viewed favorably for grant consideration.

Utilizing Resources

For the last 13 years, the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center (LWJCC) has held free cancer screenings/educational awareness events for prostate, skin, breast, colorectal and gynecologic cancer. LWJCC uses the American Cancer Society (ACS) cancer awareness calendar to plan events that designates a specific cancer featured for each month. Factors influencing the cancers we select for our screening events (breast, prostate and skin cancer) are: incidence rate, time and expense of screening tests, and "in kind" services provided by health care professionals.

According to the ACS, Prostate Cancer Awareness Week is recognized in the latter part of September. This event, which has been offered to the general public since 1992, welcomes participants from 12-counties in eastern North Carolina, There is an overwhelming response from

our medical community to assist with this screening. Urologists from Eastern Urological Associates and Brody School of Medicine physicians provide prostate examinations to more than 200 male participants per year. The Lab at Pitt County Memorial Hospital discounts the cost for the prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood tests, thus allowing us to offer free PSA testing to our screening participants. The Lab works especially hard to process and report the blood test results within the next business day. Nursing students from the local community college assist with various screening duties that include participant registration, physician chaperones, and screening navigation. Prostate cancer survivors, from the Man-To-Man support group, are available to share a survivor's perspective for coping with prostate cancer.

The city of Greenville, NC is inundated with a flurry of Breast Cancer Awareness activities, especially during the month of October. Due to the large number of planned events, it becomes a challenge to decide which event to attend. The Eastern North Carolina Dance Foundation sponsors a dance recital in June for breast cancer awareness, and donates a portion of the proceeds to breast cancer programs at Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center. In turn, our Cancer Center displays breast cancer awareness literature and visual aids before and during the performance intermission. Last year Panera Bread initiated a partnership to support breast cancer awareness in our community. Representatives from the local Panera Bread franchise, promoted breast cancer awareness during the month of October by designing a "Pink Ribbon" cherry vanilla bagel, hosting three-breast cancer "coffee chats" at their Greenville store and investing in a marketing campaign at their store and in the media to promote breast cancer awareness and advertise the store's awareness events. A regional radio station, V103.3, presented a live "remote" broadcast at Panera Bread in Greenville to kick off the events during that month. The positive response from the public encouraged the Panera Bread representatives to continue this awareness partnership with LWJCC this year.

It may appear that our Cancer Center places more emphasis on breast cancer awareness as evidenced by the large volume of programs directed toward this cause; however, it is hard to

pass up offers of support from our community. Skin cancer awareness and prevention receives a large amount of attention, partly because of our southern location and mostly because of agricultural/outdoor professions and miscellaneous recreational activities that involve exposure to damaging sunrays. The annual Skin Cancer Screening is held in May, melanoma awareness month. The American Academy of Dermatology provides screening forms and excellent skin cancer literature. Schering Plough Pharmaceuticals supplies sunscreen products, visual aids and a diagnostic screening machine that reveals the damage from the sun's intense rays. A unique way to draw attention to skin cancer awareness is via an eye-catching structure. A grant from the American Academy of Dermatology allowed Leo Jenkins Cancer Center the opportunity to construct a sunshade structure and display a sign with sun-safety tips at one of our Greenville, NC recreational facilities. The opening day ceremony featured comments from the mayor, city officials and physicians who emphasized the importance of seeking protection from the damaging rays from the sun. A grant from the Duke Endowment funded the installation of several shade structures in eastern North Carolina at Chocowinity Ball Field, Rotary Park in Morehead City and Bradford Creek Soccer Complex in Greenville. Since these recreational facilities are located in large open acreage that is fully exposed to the sun, these shade structures provide a means for shelter while watching sporting events.

Servicing Other Venues

Although our annual cancer screenings and awareness programs are well attended, demographics reveal a failure to reach our targeted population – the uninsured/underserved. The Pitt Memorial Hospital Foundation granted “seed money” for providing cancer screenings and awareness programs to the uninsured/underserved residents living in Pitt County, NC. This funding enables our Cancer Center to focus our awareness efforts on a populace that oftentimes avoids routine wellness visits and lives a “high risk” lifestyle. A different strategy was needed to target, teach and motivate our intended population. Of particular importance was the need to resolve the following issues: penetrating the barriers into these communities, identifying the

uninsured/underserved populace, locating community facilities that accommodate health screenings, and designing a message applicable to various cultures.

Oftentimes, unexpected sources provide the solution to problems, as was the case in this circumstance. Two medical students from the Schweitzer Fellows Program at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University sought our collaboration with cancer screenings and awareness programs. These Schweitzer Fellows were providing health care assistance at community resource centers (CRC) located within our county. The HealthAssist Program operates four community resource centers (CRC) in Pitt County, NC. HealthAssist facilities offer classes related to computers, job training, health and basic life skills, and are equipped with healthcare facilities. Although these facilities offer basic health care along with awareness classes for nutrition, blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes checks, cancer screenings were never included in their services. Cancer screenings require advance preparation. As such, several factors needed consideration prior to our agreement of collaboration.

A site visit to the CRCs determined these facilities would accommodate our needs. Up to this point, all our awareness/screening programs were held at our Cancer Center. Selecting a location that is familiar and accessible to the underserved population ensures a higher number of attendees.

Finding the Ideal Partners

Establishing partnerships with HealthAssist, Pitt County Public Health Center, Brody School of Medicine, Eastern Radiologists Inc. and private practice physicians facilitated the process of identifying our intended population and delivering health services. The Pitt County Public Health Center and the HealthAssist Program have existing databases for our targeted population and facilities equipped for medical procedures. These resource networks assist our Outreach Program in reaching the uninsured/underserved population within Pitt County. One physician

remarked on feeling the rewards of participating in a screening that served a population that otherwise would not have sought medical attention had the screening been held outside their community.

Reaching Out

Offsite cancer screenings, funded by the Pitt Memorial Hospital Foundation Grant totaling \$106,500, enables our Cancer Center to provide cancer screenings and awareness education to the underserved residents living in Pitt County. In the past two years, 12 cancer screenings/awareness presentations have been held at various community facilities within our county that targets our underserved population. In the first year of the funding period, our Cancer Center offered prostate and breast cancer screenings and presented educational awareness information and supplies on colorectal and skin cancer. These specific cancers were selected for the following reasons: incidence rate within the minority population, expense related to the screening tests and the required number of healthcare participation. The information listed below indicates the numbers of people who benefited from these offsite programs:

Breast Cancer Screenings		Abnormal Findings
Clinical Breast Exams	345	44
Screening/Diagnostic Mammograms	188	8*
Instructions on Breast Self Exams	345	

***Results - 8 abnormal findings on mammograms –**

2 surgical consults

1 biopsy (results are negative)

4 recommend follow up in either 3 or 6 mos.

1 refusal to return

Prostrate Cancer Screenings

Digital Rectal Exam	53	
PSA test	53	3**

**PSA –abnormal levels referral to Urologist – results negative

Colorectal Cancer Awareness

Fecal Occult Test	28
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Skin Cancer Awareness (distributed to crop workers information translated in Spanish)

Sun Safety Instructions, sunscreen	296
Lip balm distribution	296

Networking

Health fairs offer an opportunity to meet other healthcare providers throughout the region and enable the vendor to discover additional resources within the community. Of particular value is the chance to network with faith-based organizations that offer health education ministry to their church family. These health educators disseminate information on wellness and arrange wellness lectures for their constituents. Our Cancer Center has presented cancer awareness presentations at our local churches.

Several private industries in our community arrange employee health fairs several times during the year and invite local health business to their event. Leo Jenkins Cancer Center participates in the health fairs, and present cancer awareness educational series at lunchtime learning sessions. Likewise, our Cancer Center keeps industries informed of upcoming cancer awareness/screening programs.

Conclusion

A program's success cannot be credited to one source, but rather the collective efforts of our community. Our Outreach Program is moving forward and continues to establish partnerships to enhance the quality of services. The longevity of our outreach program depends on a strong

collaboration with physicians and other independent healthcare providers and public health centers. Philanthropic contributions through medical grants, private industry, and overall community involvement provide the financial support and encouragement to continue our efforts.

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