Background: About Survivorship Care Planning (www.journeyforward.org)

A Survivorship Care Plan is a coordinated post-treatment plan between the Survivor’s oncology team, a primary care physician and other health care professionals. The oncologist creates a summary of the Survivor’s treatment and includes direction for future care.

A typical Survivorship Care Plan includes:

1. patient diagnosis and treatment summary
2. best schedule for follow-up tests
3. information on late- and long-term effects of cancer treatment
4. list of symptoms to look for
5. list of support resources

This comprehensive medical summary, given to the Survivor and their primary care physician, helps support better survivorship care. The plan includes important information for monitoring possible secondary cancers and any late- or long-term effects of the Survivor’s cancer treatment. A Survivorship Care Plan also relieves a Survivor from having to recall all the details of treatment and ensures all future health care providers are working as a team for the Survivor’s care.

Supporting Evidence that PCPs Value Survivorship Care Plans

1. Do Survivorship Care Plans Make a Difference? A Primary Care Provider Perspective
   By Marina Mor Shalom, MD, MPH, Erin E. Hahn, MPH, Jacqueline Casillas, MD, MSHS, and Patricia A. Ganz, MD

Abstract

Introduction: The growing numbers of cancer survivors will challenge the ability of oncologists to provide ongoing surveillance care. Tools such as survivorship care plans (SCPs) are needed to effectively care for these patients. The UCLA-LIVESTRONG Survivorship Center of Excellence has been providing SCPs to cancer survivors and their providers since 2006. We sought to examine views on the value and impact of SCPs from a primary care provider (PCP) perspective.

Methods: As part of a quality improvement project, we invited 32 PCPs who had received at least one SCP to participate in a semi-structured interview focused on (1) the perceived value of SCPs for patient management and (2) PCP attitudes toward follow-up care for cancer survivors. Interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

Results: Fifteen PCPs participated in the interviews and had received a total of 30 SCPs. Ten of them indicated reading the SCPs before being contacted for the interview. All 10 PCPs indicated that the SCP provided additional information about the patient’s cancer history and/or recommendations for follow-up care, and eight reported a resulting change in patient care. PCPs identified useful elements of the SCP that assisted them with patient care, and they valued the comprehensive format of the SCP. PCPs indicated that after reading the SCPs they felt more confident and better prepared to care for the cancer survivor.
(Cancer) Survivorship Care Planning and Primary Care

**Conclusion:** SCPs were highly valued by these PCPs, increasing their knowledge about survivors’ cancer history and recommended surveillance care and influencing patient care.

2. **WellPoint’s Provider Relationship Study**

Since 2006, *WellPoint’s Provider Relationship Study* has included three questions in this annual provider satisfaction survey of affiliate-contracted providers to help determine how prepared and comfortable primary care physicians feel in caring for patients who are cancer survivors. Specifically, the three questions relate to: 1) Frequency of receiving end-of-treatment summary (Survivorship Care Plan) from oncologist, 2) Perception of preparedness to manage late health effects resulting from treatment, and 3) Perception of preparedness to handle transition of care issues for patients. Since 2006, results continue to show that consistent receipt of end-of-treatment summary reports will continue to increase the preparedness of primary care physicians to handle transition of care for cancer patients and to manage late stage health effects.

3. **PCP Focus Group Research Related to (Cancer) Survivorship Care Planning**

*Decision Development, Inc. Feb 2010*

- The primary goals of this qualitative market research were to:
  - Assess awareness and involvement of PCPs with the care of cancer survivors
  - Understand the perspective of PCPs regarding end-of treatment summaries, *Survivorship Care Planning*
  - Obtain PCPs’ reactions to survivorship care planning, including receipt and impression of the actual care plan
  - Assess awareness of the *Journey Forward* program
  - Identify new ways to communicate with PCPs about the care of cancer survivors

- **Methodology:**
  - Two focus groups were conducted with primary care physicians who spend the majority of their time in clinical practice (on average: 98% of time).
  - The groups were held on February 1, 2010 in Los Angeles, CA.
  - One group was held with PCPs who feel they are actively involved in the care of their patients who have survived cancer, and they also feel that they have effective communication with the patients’ oncologists (More Involved).
  - Participants: 4 internists and 3 family practice physicians
  - The second group was held with PCPs who feel less involved in the care of cancer survivors, and they also feel that they do not receive sufficient information from patients’ oncologists (Less Involved).
  - Participants: 5 internists and 1 family practice physician

- **Relevant Key Findings**

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PCPs expect the oncologist to communicate with them regarding the needs of cancer survivors because, according to the PCPs, there is NO other source of information for the care of cancer survivors.

When PCPs are queried about what is important for a cancer survivor to know, the PCPs agree that cancer survivors need to know what to watch for and the need for a healthy lifestyle.

The PCPs describe the Survivorship Care Plan as “exactly what is needed” to care for cancer survivors and they would like to receive Survivorship Care Plans for their cancer survivors.