Early palliative care delivered by lay navigator coaches

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Intervention work involving lay navigators

Project Cornerstone (NCI R37CA252868)
Randomized trial of lay navigator-led early telehealth palliative care for African American and/or rural family caregivers of persons with newly-diagnosed advanced cancer

Project CASCADE (NCI R01CA262039)
Factorial trial of a lay navigator-led early telehealth intervention to train family caregivers to provide decision support to persons with newly-diagnosed cancer
Why lay navigators?

• Navigation programs have proliferated since passing of the Affordable Care Act

• One-on-one guidance to patients and families across health system settings

• Respected, trusted, and culturally aware members of their community, who have been shown to enhance access to health services in underrepresented populations

• Represent a largely untapped workforce who can greatly expand the reach of palliative care services and support

Fischer et al., J Palliat Med. 2007; Freeman & Rodriguez, Cancer, 2011; Natale-Pereira et al., Cancer, 2011; Palos & Hare, Cancer, 2011; Phillips et al., Support Care Cancer, 2019; Rocque et al., JAMA Oncol, 2017
Core Competencies of Cornerstone and CASCADE lay navigators trained as support care coaches

- Facilitate family-centered care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective
- Assist family caregivers in identifying and accessing outside resources and navigating healthcare systems
- Screen for distress and assess problems related to the individual's caregiving role. Assist with problem solving and action planning to address challenges.
- Educate caregivers in stress management, coping, asking for and getting help, effective social support and cancer co-management, self-care, communication, preparing for the future, and advance care planning.
- Provide evidence-based information and partner with the interdisciplinary team and consult clinicians to address questions about medications, treatment options, and expected outcomes.
- Empower family caregivers to be an active, supportive partner with patients and their oncology team in healthcare decision-making.
- Empower caregivers to value and maintain their own wellness by providing coaching on stress management, coping, and self-care.
- Follow-up with caregivers to reinforce key principles of being an effective family caregiver, conduct distress screening, and provide referrals to supportive resources in collaboration with the interdisciplinary team.
Lay navigators receive advanced training in health coaching

- 50-60 hours of structured didactic and skills training curriculum
- Enhanced preparation areas: lay navigation, health coaching and behavioral activation skills, problem solving support, family caregiving, oncology and palliative care fundamentals
- Simulated practice with debrief
- Ongoing weekly oversight by palliative care IDT