

Project Title: Enhancing Population Health Management using Social Determinants of Health Navigation

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Background: Now more than ever, health care systems and providers are expected to identify patients who have unmet social needs and implement clinical operations to address these factors as part of population health management. However, evidence about effective approaches for screening patients for social determinants of health (SDOH) and implementing socially-informed care is limited. Ideally, efforts to screen and address SDOH should be based on the organization's capacity and resources to implement evidence-based clinical solutions.

Objectives: The purpose of this project is to determine the organizational capacity to implement SDOH navigation for cancer care into clinical operations at an NCI-designated cancer center.

Methods: A landscape analysis was completed to characterize existing navigation programs, describe approaches and strategies that are being used to screen patients for social risk factors, and identify resources that are needed to provide SDOH navigation.

Outcomes: Currently, nurse navigation is provided as part of clinical operations for cancer care. Nurse navigation has critical components that include patient education about cancer treatment and screening for psychosocial distress. Lay patient and caregiver navigation is also provided by staff members affiliated with outreach and education services. However, SDOH screening could be enhanced as part of nurse navigation and there are important opportunities to enhance linkages between lay- and clinic-based navigation. Preliminary workflows were designed to centralize navigation across multiple domains related to community outreach and clinical care, recruit and train a SDOH navigation workforce, and integrate existing lay and clinical navigation efforts through a Multidisciplinary Navigation Forum.

Next Steps/Anticipated Deliverables: Process maps have been developed to centralize and integrate navigation for cancer care and to identify specific components of navigation services across key domains of cancer care. Additionally, a SDOH navigation protocol has been developed for future implementation.