American Cancer Society Launches New Program that Provides Individualized Assistance to Those Impacted by Cancer

ACS CARES (Community Access to Resources, Education, and Support) offers people with cancer and caregivers quality information and one-on one support in a convenient mobile app

ATLANTA, November 27, 2023 – Today, the American Cancer Society (ACS) widely launched ACS CARES (Community Access to Resources, Education, and Support), a new multi-channel, customizable program that delivers non-clinical patient navigation support to cancer patients and caregivers. Through a mobile app and personalized support from trained American Cancer Society volunteers, the program provides broader access to individualized resources to mitigate barriers to care, deliver high-quality, reliable information and offer emotional support during the cancer journey.

Patient navigation helps people with cancer deal with issues that prevent screening and diagnosis, access to cancer care, and finding what is needed after cancer treatment. More than 1.9 million people are expected to be diagnosed with cancer this year. After diagnosis, many will face uncertainty about next steps and finding accurate information. The ACS CARES mobile app provides patients and caregivers an easy, free way to:

- Access personalized, quality cancer-related information that updates as they age, the situation changes, or new information becomes available.
- Connect one-on-one with trained community volunteers who share the same cancer experiences and background including diagnosis, location, military status, race and ethnicity.
- Find reliable information on addressing important topics such as emotional health, finances, transportation, and dependent support.
- Speak directly with American Cancer Society cancer information specialists when they have questions day or night, 365 days a year.

For those who are not as comfortable in the digital space, the program also places trained college and graduate student volunteers in oncology clinics to help patients and caregivers receive non-clinical, individualized in-person support.

“For years, the American Cancer Society has viewed patient navigation as a critical strategy in reducing health disparities across the cancer continuum,“ said Dr. Arif Kamal, chief patient officer of the American Cancer Society. “Patient-centered support has demonstrated effectiveness in addressing many issues including lodging, transportation, and emotional and financial health, all barriers that can significantly impact a person’s cancer care and quality of life. ACS CARES was launched to complement health system clinical navigation by putting access to resources in the palm of a patient or caregiver’s hand.”

A $1 million commitment, to be used over two years, from the Deloitte Health Equity Institute (DHEI) will help the American Cancer Society expand the program to focus on increasing multi-cultural engagement in all the organization’s patient navigation programs through cultural competency training and Spanish translation; accelerate nationwide deployment of the ACS CARES app; and increase the recruitment of ACS CARES student volunteers at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions, and rural health systems. The American Cancer Society hopes the donation will encourage additional collaborators to assist in continuing to expand the reach and scope of the initiative.

“Cancer affects many of us, including our own professionals and families,” said Dr. Jay Bhatt, managing director of the Deloitte Health Equity Institute and Center for Health Solutions. “Patients and families face challenges when it comes to prevention and treatment, and navigating those challenges is critical for better health outcomes, all while working to eliminate the health inequities that exist. We are pleased to collaborate with ACS in bringing an innovative, tech-enabled approach to the patient experience, blending relevant content, staff-assisted navigation, and virtual/in-person support. ACS’s personalized approach, leveraging community relationships,

allows us to together drive impact on a national scale."

"Health equity is a moral and business imperative," Bhatt added. "Every organization, across every industry, can play a role in making health more equitable – within their organizations, and in the communities they serve."

ACS CARES is part of the American Cancer Society's comprehensive patient navigation strategy that includes professional navigation training and credentialing, navigation capacity building grants to health systems, the ACS Patient Navigation Roundtable, the ACS Global BEACON Initiative, and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network's policy priorities to support navigation through payment for patient navigators and Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance coverage.

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About the American Cancer Society
The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 100 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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