



Providing for Women with Breast Cancer

From the point of diagnosis women with breast cancer need good information, practical assistance and psycho-social support for themselves and their family -- in addition to medical treatment. It is important to understand and serve the needs of breast cancer patients and survivors beyond episodic medical care, to also deal with the emotional turmoil and logistical challenges of having breast cancer -- the services to take care of "the rest of you".

The Issue

There have been successful organizational initiatives but **no comprehensive local or regional collaborations** which include survivors, service providers, the medical community, advocates and government **to address the critical needs of patients after diagnosis**. While there are many services available to address specific needs, too many gaps exist and there is insufficient assistance to navigate the system.

Who We Are

We are a dedicated group of **survivors, service and medical providers, community volunteers and business entrepreneurs** working collaboratively as a Leadership Project of the Entrepreneurs Foundation of Central Texas. Our organizations include the Breast Cancer Resource Center, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the Lance Armstrong Foundation, St. David's Community Health Foundation, Team Survivor, the Entrepreneurs Foundation of Central Texas, Spiceworks, IBM, KVUE-TV, WINGS of Texas, Cancer Connection, Trust for Public Land, American Cancer Society, DLA Piper, Care Communities, Support Source, MoveThroughCancer and the Seton Healthcare System.

What We Are Doing

We are **identifying the best continuum of social services for breast cancer patients and survivors, identifying gaps in services, integrating existing resources and incubating new services**. We will set the standard for comprehensive, community-wide services including emotional, physical, financial and practical support for individuals and families -- across culture, race, socioeconomic boundaries, values and beliefs.

Our Goals

- **Create and build the best continuum of care model for our community**
- **Identify service gaps and incubate or otherwise support new services while supporting existing services**
- **Leverage scarce financial resources with additional public and private funding**

These long-term objectives will be met concurrent with tangible, initiatives addressing specific needs. These initiatives may involve integrating resources from existing programs or the creation of a new program. Our approach will be unique to each situation, but each project includes measurement and evaluation to ensure positive impact is delivered. The prioritized gaps include information, nutrition and meals, transportation, patient navigation, childcare, emergency funding and legal services.





What We've Done and What We Plan to Do

Connection- We have created the first, on-going survivor and provider forum (over 40 organizations are represented) which has already inventoried existing services and identified gaps. To address these gaps (and others) we plan to complete a meaningful initiative, which may involve bringing together resources from existing programs, or the creation of a new program.

Information- We have published the Breast Cancer Resource Guide for Central Texas, the only comprehensive directory to social services. This Guide is updated quarterly, and is available in English or Spanish, free-of-charge, online or in hard copies at medical and social service providers.

Nutritional Support- We are managing a Meals and Nutritional Support Pilot Program serving over 50 individuals in Travis County. The program offers delivery of prepared meals, groceries and nutritional information free-of-charge for the patient, a caregiver, and dependent children. The project is collaboration between Breast Cancer Services, the Capital Area Food Bank, HEB, the Spirited Chef, and 17 local breast cancer service providers.

Community Support- We are developing a community-wide informational resource website. This website will provide assistance with needs assessment; enhance access to services and care, and build an online community using the most current social networking features. Resources and services will be provided for any point along the breast cancer continuum. This website will be an invaluable resource for women, their families and support networks at any point along the breast cancer experience.

Patient Navigation- Guidance through the complicated medical and social services system was identified as a key gap in our existing continuum of care. To address this gap we have created a work group, which includes representatives from medical and social service providers (11 organizations are represented). We are collaborating to develop and implement a comprehensive Patient Navigation Outreach Project. We have studied the research, reviewed program models in other communities, inventoried services available in Central Texas, and identified best practices among existing providers locally and nationally. We are currently developing a needs assessment process, a needs based programmatic intervention, an implementation plan and evaluation measurements.

How You Can Help

There are many ways to help. To learn more, please contact Marion Cimbala at Marion@givetoaustin.org or at 512.476.6814.

** The Entrepreneurs Foundation of Central Texas is an organization of over 120 high-tech, venture-backed member companies, their entrepreneurs, board and employees. We facilitate the contribution of time, talent and equity to make Central Texas an even better place to live, work and play.*

