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### Positive Quality Intervention: General Survivorship Considerations

**Description:** The purpose of this PQI is to understand the importance of survivorship to help maximize the quality of life of both survivors and caregivers. The focus is on the impact both the diagnosis and treatment of cancer have on an adult survivor.

**Background:** Due to improvements in cancer detection and treatment, two-thirds of those diagnosed with invasive cancer today will live more than five years, resulting in a rising population of long-term survivors.<sup>1</sup> An individual is considered a cancer survivor from diagnosis through the rest of their life.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it can be challenging for survivors to transition to a new way of life. Survivorship encompasses many facets, which include surveillance for recurrence or spread, new cancer diagnosis, monitoring for long-term effects of cancer, including psychosocial, physical, and immunologic, prevention of late effects of therapy, and coordination of care between healthcare providers. Many individuals will adjust to cancer and what it brings, but a subgroup of patients will struggle with emotional adjustment in the survivorship period. A study by Dr. Yi and Dr. Syrjala from Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington, showed that approximately 18 to 20 percent of long-term cancer adult survivors report anxiety symptoms.<sup>2</sup> Other identified risk factors for anxiety in adult survivors include a shorter time since diagnosis, a higher number of comorbid conditions, younger age, living alone, and a diagnosis of lung cancer or melanoma.<sup>2</sup> Healthy lifestyle and behavioral counseling are important to reduce risk factors that may contribute to subsequent cancers.

**PQI Process:** Upon cancer diagnosis or new patient presentation

- Ensure during the initial encounter a dedicated Survivorship or Behavioral Health team is available with the patient's treatment plan
- Care team is encouraged to assess the following at regular intervals:
  - Current disease status
  - Functional/performance status
  - Medication use (including OTC and supplements)
  - Comorbidities
  - Prior cancer treatment history
  - Family history
  - Psychosocial factors
  - Assess weight and health behaviors that can modify cancer and comorbidity risks
- Survivorship program Resources
  - Built into electronic health record
  - Assessed at initial visit and throughout cancer journey and following the completion of treatment

Resources	Areas of Focus	Tools Used
Distress screening <sup>3</sup>	Practice Problems Family Problems Spiritual/Religious Concerns Physical Problems	Survey NCCN Distress thermometer Tool <sup>4</sup>
Sexual health <sup>5</sup>	Fertility preservation Garment education/ fittings	Retail pharmacy/Sexual

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** NCODA has developed this Positive Quality Intervention platform. This platform is intended as an educational aid, does not provide individual medical advice, and does not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. This platform does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warning, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with the medication. The materials contained in this platform do not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this medication by NCODA. NCODA does not ensure the accuracy of the information presented and assumes no liability relating to its accuracy. All decisions related to taking this medication should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional. It is the individual’s sole responsibility to seek guidance from a qualified healthcare professional. *Updated 2.12.24*

	Pre/post treatment sexual healthcare/counseling Sexual health assistance for patients with ostomy bags Pelvic floor rehab	therapist – vaginal dilators, lubricants, cock rings, condoms, OhNuts, supplements for menopause
Palliative care	Physical therapy Behavioral health Pastoral care Social work services Pain management Nutrition/naturopathic services Survivorship/sexual function Hospice care resources	EHR order set
Survivorship care plans	Chart review for eligibility Must be curative intent Completed treatment (chemotherapy, radiation, surgery) Showing no evidence of disease Patients on long-term hormone blockers can also receive a care plan <i>Patients that do not qualify are tracked as: disease control, treating, not returning, deceased</i>	Medically Integrated Care Team
Other items for care team to address	Yearly and on-going immunizations Address chemotherapy-induced long term side effects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cardiac toxicity</li> <li>▪ Fatigue</li> <li>▪ Sleep disorder</li> <li>▪ Pain</li> </ul> Late effects of radiation therapy	NCCN <sup>6</sup> Survivorship Assessment (see supplemental information)
Patient & Caregiver Resources	Peer-to-peer connections Support groups (virtual & in-person) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer led</li> <li>▪ Subject matter expert led</li> </ul> Hometown connections/community support Virtual events and activities Support and educational resources Volunteer opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-hospital</li> <li>▪ In my community</li> <li>▪ Virtual</li> </ul>	See resources in your local area

### Patient-Centered Activities:

- Breathing techniques<sup>7</sup> – mindfulness, heart-centered breathing, thymus tap
- Emotional Freedom Technique<sup>8</sup> – tapping to release held emotions
- Self-care – going for walks, bubble bath or soaking feet in warm water, massage, things that nourish the body, meditation, spending time with loved ones<sup>9-10</sup>
- Progressive muscle relaxation for body awareness
- Sleep hygiene – setting a consistent bed time, avoiding caffeine in the afternoons, limit screen time within two hours of bed, sleep in a cool/dark room
- Movement – yoga, Qigong, Tai Chi
- Support groups like Cancer Fighters or community/church groups

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