

What is a Breast Health Navigator?

- **A nurse** who is proficiently knowledgeable about breast diseases.
- **A provider** of educational information and support to all women concerned about their breast health.
- **An educational and emotional consultant** for women with benign breast diseases.
- **A supporter** of the breast cancer patient and her family in understanding and coping with the strong emotions that accompany a breast cancer diagnosis. She remains a constant caregiver and overseer of the patient's and her family's educational, emotional and social needs.
- **A provider** of educational resources for the patient and her family to answer their questions and address their fears during the breast cancer experience.
- **A facilitator** of physicians' recommendations for patient care to help ensure patient compliance and understanding.
- **A nurse educator** that provides the facts – not opinions and not treatment advice – that is the role of the physicians. She explains advantages and disadvantages and leaves final decisions to the patient and her physician. She supports their decisions as being the right ones for them.
- **A triage manager** in assessing patients' educational and social needs and appropriately referring to the proper source of help.
- **A group leader** and facilitator of support groups for patients, their support partners, and children.
- **A nurse educator** for other medical personnel in understanding benign and malignant diseases, their treatment and the patient's emotional and social recovery from the disease.
- **A public educator** on the early detection of breast disease and breast self-exam skills.
- **A public advocate** for the needs of breast cancer patients and their families.
- **A researcher** of the latest information on changes in breast health and breast cancer care to help keep staff and physicians up-to-date.
- **A supplier** of current educational information to physicians, nurses and patients.

The role of the Breast Health Specialist/Navigator is to address both the art and the science of breast health care and redefines the patient's experience.

Why is a Breast Health Specialist/Navigator Valuable?

- Manages the challenge of cost reduction, a pivotal driving force in healthcare
- Acknowledges cost-restraint mandates, such as early discharge from hospitals, by enabling patient with resources and empowering her with understanding of her care process
- Provides patient self-care skills in response to reduced access to caregiver
- Addresses patients' unmet needs and enhances patients' satisfaction by responding to their most frequent request – information and support during illness
- Provides professional guidance in coordination, execution and evaluation of their healthcare treatment plans.

The breast health specialist (case manager, navigator, educator) serves as a consistent care coordinator throughout the continuum of care assessing the physical, psychological and social needs of the patient. The assessment is relayed to a multidisciplinary team to collaboratively design a care plan with desired outcomes. The breast health specialist focuses on achieving the outcomes within effective and realistic time frames. She monitors the patient and triages needed services across all product or service lines while ensuring proper access to these services. In addition, she extends services to help the family learn care-giving skills and patient self-care skills. Teaching the patient and family

self-care skills, including physical and psychological, reduces acute annoyances, costly hospitalizations and inappropriate medical care access. The results are enhanced patient outcomes, increased satisfaction and reduced costs of care.

Summary of Breast Health Specialist/Navigator Role

- Assess to identify high-risk patients (physical, psychological and social)
- Plan healthcare pathways with multidisciplinary care team
- Coordinate care with other team members
- Provide education and support for patient and family
- Monitor patient's total response to care for optimum outcomes