

UCI Medical Center

University of California, Irvine

A Passion for Care. The Power to Cure.

CANCER CENTER: DEVELOPMENT OF A PATIENT AND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the Cancer Center initiated the Psycho-oncology Task Force to provide insight, feedback and support for patient-centered support activities at the Cancer Center. The Task Force is composed of Cancer Center staff and broad representation from the community, including cancer survivors and professionals who care for people living with cancer. In 2004, the Psycho-oncology Task Force identified a patient and family need for more information about cancer and its affiliated topics. Education commonly helps alleviate some of the fears, concerns, and questions posed by patients and their families. A centralized, staffed center can provide patients and their family members a resource outside of their regularly scheduled patient appointment where they can search for information about their diagnosis, disease process, treatment options, and any other area of interest.

INTERVENTION

The Task Force decided that creating a resource center would provide a great benefit to the patient population and their family members. Through various grants and donations, the Psycho-oncology Task Force was able to purchase educational materials, furniture, a computer, a television, and a CD player and place them in a comfortable and welcoming environment where people could visit and find information that might assist them in better coping with their diagnosis. Available educational materials include books, videotapes, audio tapes, a computer and an educational kiosk with monthly updated material from the National Cancer Institute. The Patient/Family Resource Center is located on the first floor of the Cancer Center and manned by volunteers who assist in finding the appropriate information. Many of the volunteers are cancer survivors; they provide inspiration and hope to visitors and possess a unique understanding of visitors' concerns.

RESULTS

The Patient/Family Resource Center opened in March 2005. As of October 31, 2005, the resource center had received 1,125 visitors, each of whom has utilized various aspect of the center. The Patient/Family Resource Center has been very well accepted, visitors are

very grateful for this resource; they particularly appreciate the warm and welcoming environment. They commonly express their gratitude for having this additional resource at their disposal, as evidenced by the unsolicited comments written in the sign-in book, such as:

- Very much needed service for families.
- Nice addition and conveniently located!
- I love this place!
- Impressive! A warm place to visit.
- Homey and comfortable!
- This is an awesome idea! It's both fun and educational.
- Loved the place. Looks good and feels like home.

In order to better utilize the resource center space, the educational kiosk was moved out of the resource center in July 2005 and installed in the second floor clinic waiting room. In this more visible location, the kiosk gets more use by patients and their families waiting to be seen for appointments. The center will continue to monitor the use of the kiosk to determine if the new location is effective.

FUTURE PLANS

The Cancer Center plans to continue to recruit more volunteers and to offer other activities in the Patient/Family Resource Center space. At this time, some mini-group meetings have been scheduled in the resource center, but the area could be further utilized for Cancer Center patient educational or support activities. While tea and candy or other snacks are available, the center would like to have refreshments available on a regular basis. Staff would also like to expand the various resources within the center. Additional activities, regular available refreshments, and an expanded collection of education materials will all require additional monies. Therefore, staff will continue to write grants and to solicit donations for Patient/Family Resource Center development.

For more information, please contact:

Donna Baker, LCSW
714-456-8609