



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Award ID:
PP110172

Project Title:
Nurse and Social Worker Training - Access to Cancer Care for Low-Income and Uninsured Patients

Award Mechanism:
Health Behavior Change Through Public and Professional Education and Training

Principal Investigator:
Foxhall, Lewis

Entity:
The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Lay Summary:

Texas has the highest proportion of people without health insurance (25.5 percent) in the country and has the fifth highest proportion in poverty (16.6 percent). Cancer patients without health insurance coverage have significantly poorer outcomes. Texas health care providers are particularly concerned about caring for uninsured and underinsured patients, higher cancer incidence rates in low-income and minority individuals and quality of care in rural areas. In Texas, county governments are responsible for medical care for low-income residents though it is limited. Procedures for accessing care vary from county to county, so it can be confusing for people who need services and for nurses and social workers who assist poor or uninsured patients. Information is available on the Internet to guide patients and help them connect with needed care. As an example, Texas Cancer Information (TCI) created an online guide, Access to Cancer Care for Low-Income and Uninsured Patients. TCI identified information on state and local cancer screening and treatment services available to uninsured and low-income Texans in each of Texas' 254 counties. TCI talked to representatives in each county to find out procedures that patients need to follow, what documentation they need and where they can receive screening or treatment. TCI updates each of the Access documents regularly and posts them to the TCI website where the public, nurses, social workers and others can view them or print them out to give to a family member, friend or patient. The TCI Web site also has Spanish Access to Care documents for seventy-seven counties, representing 90 percent of the Hispanic population of Texas, including fourteen rural counties. However, many low income and primarily Spanish-speaking individuals cannot access this information on the Internet. Many Texas nurses and social workers work with low-income and uninsured patients, particularly those in rural and underserved areas and areas with large Spanish-speaking populations who could use this information to improve access to screening and treatment services. TCI will create online training modules for nurses and social workers about the issues faced by low-income and uninsured Texans and how to use Access to Care and other Internet resources to help their English and Spanish-speaking patients connect with the care they need. With better knowledge and confidence these health professionals will be better equipped to help patients find care and have better cancer related outcomes.