



## CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Award ID:  
PP170023

Project Title:  
Active Living After Cancer: Combining a Physical Activity Program with  
Survivor Navigation

Award Mechanism:  
Competitive Continuation/Expansion - Evidence-Based Cancer Prevention  
Services

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

### Lay Summary:

Need: Research suggests that physical activity improves the health, physical functioning, and quality of life of cancer survivors. Cohort studies show links between physical activity after breast or colorectal cancer diagnosis to a lower risk of recurrence and death from cancer. Despite this evidence and physical activity recommendations for survivors from national organizations, the majority of cancer survivors do not adhere to these recommendations. Cancer survivors who are minority or low-income may be particularly at risk for being physically inactive. Currently there are few programs to help cancer survivors become more physically active. In particular, there is a need for low-cost or free programs that are accessible to low-income and medically underserved cancer survivors.

Overall Project Strategy: We propose to expand our current Active Living after Breast Cancer program geographically, by including sites in El Paso, and to adapt the program to include survivors of any type of cancer. The program will be renamed "Active Living after Cancer," and its goal will be to improve the quality of life of sedentary cancer survivors, particularly those who are minority, medically underserved, or have low health literacy. The 12-session program will teach behavioral and cognitive skills to help cancer survivors increase their physical activity by incorporating moderate intensity physical activity into daily life. The program also will provide support related to health and quality of life issues important to cancer survivors, including fatigue, psychological distress, nutrition, and communication with health care providers, and will navigate participants to appropriate services. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center will serve as the training and evaluation center for this program, and will partner with three community organizations, Kelsey Research Foundation and ProSalud in Houston and the Cancer and Chronic Disease Consortium in El Paso, that will promote and implement the program. These partners are referred to as Implementation Partners and will be trained to administer the program independently using telementoring sessions based on the Project ECHO model. We will also partner with other community organizations (Referral Partners), such as Project CHURCH, the Greater Houston Area YMCA, and Las Palmas del Sol Healthcare, who will identify and refer their own members to participate.

Specific Goals: (1) Develop capacity of Implementation Partners who will provide the

Active Living after Cancer program to their own cancer survivor members and to cancer survivors from other community organizations; (2) Provide the ALAC program to cancer survivors in the greater Houston area and El Paso, with a focus on medically underserved/low-income populations; (3) Develop relationships with referral partners for the ALAC Program, including health care organizations, churches, and community organizations with contact with cancer survivors, particularly organizations in underserved communities; (4) Increase physical activity and improve physical functioning and quality of life among cancer survivors participating in the ALAC group program.

**Innovation:** This program uses an innovative approach toward increasing physical activity. Rather than promote structured exercise at a gym several times a week, this program recommends increasing physical activity by incorporating short bouts of moderate intensity activity into daily life. Research shows this approach improves fitness and health outcomes, and overcomes barriers that make it difficult to sustain physical activity. The program also combines the physical activity program with support and navigation services to help cancer survivors cope with salient cancer-related issues. The program will use Project ECHO's model of telementoring to train Implementation Partners. This model is a novel approach to build a referral network and train community partners to independently implement the program successfully. The program will increase cancer survivorship resources and physical activity programs to improve the wellness and quality of life of cancer survivors in the Houston and El Paso areas.

**Significance and Impact:** By helping cancer survivors become more physically active, physical functioning and quality of life will be significantly improved, which can result in being better able to resume pre-diagnosis roles and activities, such as paid employment, caring for family members, and enjoying leisure time activities. An increase in physical activity may also help increase cancer survival, and reduce the risk of recurrence and death from cancer. The telementoring model is an innovative, proven approach that supports each community partner's independent implementation of the program and creates an open network to identify and manage other needs for cancer survivors statewide.