

Oncology Navigation Standards of Professional Practice

The Professional Oncology Navigation Task Force

Documented throughout recorded history, cancer has been called the “emperor of all maladies.”¹ Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020.² The disease can pose significant burdens to the individuals, families, and communities impacted and to the professionals and systems charged with caring for them. It taxes our individual physical, emotional, and financial capabilities, and our global systemic and financial capacities.

Cancer also has a disproportionate impact on communities of color, those with lower socioeconomic status, LGBTQ communities, and other populations who tend to experience access inequalities, lower-quality health-

care, and higher cancer death rates.³⁻⁶ The confluence of social determinants of health (which are the “conditions in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect health, functioning, and quality of life”⁷), systemic racism, and inadequate policy approaches have contributed to a cancer care system that produces inequitable experiences and outcomes.

Patient navigation emerged as one solution following the 1989 American Cancer Society National Hearings on Cancer in the Poor.⁸ The hearings highlighted the substantial barriers, pain and suffering, personal sacrifices, and discrimination many people with limited financial means face when confronted with cancer.⁸ In 1990, Harold P. Freeman, MD, launched the first patient navigation program in the United States based in Harlem, New York.⁸ Patient navigation was developed as a “strategy to improve outcomes in marginalized populations by eliminating barriers to timely diagnosis and treatment of cancer and other chronic diseases.”⁹

Since the founding of the first program, patient navigation has evolved, expanded, and grown and is sometimes contracted based on available support and funding. Navigation has received government attention and funding as evidenced by the Patient Navigator Outreach and Chronic Disease Prevention Act of 2005 and systems-level integration as evidenced by the American College of Surgeons’ Commission on Cancer standard mandating navigation within accredited programs beginning in 2015. It has come to include unlicensed, nonclinical navigators as well as those with clinical nurse or social work licenses. In addition, a host of individuals fill vital roles alongside navigators in clinics, hospitals, and communities. These include community health workers, promotores/promotoras de salud, and financial navigators along with many other individuals and roles who help to navigate patients across the cancer care system.

Freeman and Rodriguez noted in 2011 that “patient navigation should be defined with a clear scope of practice that distinguishes the role and responsibilities of the navigator from that of all other providers.”¹⁰ Despite, or perhaps because of, the growth and evolution of the profession, it has historically been a moving target to define and standardize oncology navigation.

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The Professional Oncology Navigation Task Force members include select representatives of professional organizations relevant to navigation and individuals who served on the Biden Cancer Initiative Patient Navigation Working Group.

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created this document to provide professional oncology clinical navigators and patient navigators with clear information regarding the standards of professional practice. This includes the knowledge and skills all professional navigators should possess to deliver high-quality, competent, and ethical services to people impacted by cancer. These standards also provide benchmarks for use by healthcare employers and information for policy and decision makers, as well as other health professionals and the public to understand the role of professional oncology navigators. These standards are intended to provide guidance and may be applied differently, as appropriate, in different settings. These standards are designed to address professional oncology navigator practice and are not meant to apply to individuals working in a volunteer navigation role. It is important to read this document in whole and cross-reference within the document and with relevant professional guidance as necessary.

Goals of the Oncology Navigation Standards of Professional Practice

- Enhance the quality of professional navigation services provided to people impacted by cancer
- Advocate with and on behalf of people at risk for cancer, cancer patients, survivors, families, and caregivers to protect and promote the needs and interests of people impacted by cancer
- Encourage navigator participation in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of best practices and quality improvement in oncology care
- Promote navigator participation in the development, analysis, and refinement of public policy at all levels to best support the interests of people impacted by cancer and to protect and promote the profession of navigation
- Educate all stakeholders about the essential role of navigators in oncology systems

Definitions

The definitions included in these Standards reflect a select group of professional oncology navigators, including patient navigators and clinical navigators. They are not meant to apply to every specific type of oncology navigator or volunteer navigator. There may be other roles that deliver select components of patient navigation, such as financial navigation.

Professional Navigator: A trained individual who is employed and paid by a healthcare-, advocacy-, and/or community-based organization to fill the role of oncology navigator. Positions that fall under the professional navigator category include oncology patient navigators and

clinical navigators. Clinical navigators comprise oncology nurse navigators and oncology social work navigators.

Oncology Patient Navigator: A professional who provides individualized assistance to patients and families affected by cancer to improve access to healthcare services. A patient navigator may work within the healthcare system at the point of screening, diagnosis, treatment, or survivorship or across the cancer care spectrum or outside the healthcare system at a community-based organization or as a freelance patient navigator.¹⁰ A patient navigator may be employed by a clinic or a community-based organization and work throughout the community, crossing the clinic threshold to continue to provide a consistent person of contact and support within the healthcare system. A patient navigator does not have or use clinical training.

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Clinical Navigator/Oncology Nurse Navigator: A professional registered nurse with oncology-specific clinical knowledge who offers individual assistance to patients, families, and caregivers to help overcome healthcare system barriers. Using the nursing process, an oncology nurse navigator provides education and resources to facilitate informed decision-making and timely access to quality health and psychosocial care throughout all phases of the cancer continuum.¹¹

Clinical Navigator/Oncology Social Work Navigator: A professional social worker with a master’s degree in social work and a clinical license (or equivalent as defined by state laws) with oncology-specific and clinical psychosocial knowledge who offers individual assistance to patients, families, and caregivers to help overcome healthcare system barriers. Using the social work process, an oncology social work navigator provides education and resources to facilitate informed decision-making and timely access to quality health and psychosocial care throughout all phases of the cancer continuum.

Oncology Navigation: Individualized assistance offered to patients, families, and caregivers to help overcome healthcare system barriers and facilitate timely access to

quality health and psychosocial care from prediagnosis through all phases of the cancer experience.¹¹⁻¹³

Patient: In this document, patient is used to refer to an individual screened for or diagnosed with cancer, as well as their family and support systems. When working with children with cancer, both the child and the parent/legal guardian are incorporated into all aspects of care, including decision-making.

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Oncology Navigation Standards of Professional Practice

The Oncology Navigation Standards of Professional Practice identify best practices to promote a high level of navigation quality. They are intended to serve as guidance for professional practice (regardless of setting). Exceptions to the Standards may be necessary and should be determined on an individual or institutional basis. The following standards apply to all 3 types of professional navigators unless otherwise noted below. ✨

References

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Appendix

Knowledge Resources

- Scope and Standards of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nursing Practice*. Chicago, IL: Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses; 2014.
- Christensen D, Cantril C. *Oncology Nurse Navigation: Delivering Patient-Centered Care Across the Continuum*. 2nd ed. Pittsburgh, PA: Oncology Nursing Society; 2020.
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Acknowledgments

The professional organizations responsible for the creation of the *Oncology Navigation Standards for Professional Practice* include the Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigators, Association of Oncology Social Work, Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses, and Oncology Nursing Society. The patient organizations involved in the creation of this document include the Cancer Support Community and the Smith Center for Healing and the Arts. The initial work of the Biden Cancer Initiative working group on patient navigation also led to the creation of this document. We would like to thank all individuals and organizations who reviewed and commented on this document.

Standard 1: Ethics Oncology navigators practice ethically.	
Type of Navigator	Standard Detail
Ethical Responsibility to Patients	
All navigators:	Practice with compassion, respect, and empathy for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person. Practice with a primary commitment to the patient. Promote, advocate, and protect the rights, health, and safety of patients.
Boundaries	
All navigators:	Have a primary commitment to the patient. Adhere to clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries with patients. Work within the boundaries of their education, training, and scope.
Competence	
All navigators:	Provide services within the boundaries of their education, training, licensure, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, and/or other relevant professional experience. Demonstrate understanding of cancer, healthcare systems, national and community resources, and how patients access care and services across the cancer continuum to support and assist patients.
Conflicts of Interest	
All navigators:	Exercise professional discretion, are alert to, and avoid, conflicts of interest and dual relationships in order to prevent harm to patients. Inform patients (in consultation with their supervisor) of potential or identified conflicts of interest and take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that protects and promotes the interests of patients.
Privacy and Confidentiality	
All navigators:	Demonstrate a commitment to ethical principles of their profession and compliance with relevant laws, policies, and regulations. Respect and protect patients' rights to privacy. Apply standards of confidentiality to private patient information they have access to as a part of their employment. Recognize when private information must be disclosed to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a patient or others.

Standard 2: Qualifications Oncology navigators obtain the necessary education, licensure, and/or certification for their position.	
Scope	
Clinical nurse navigators:	Are accountable to patients, the navigation profession, applicable state boards of nursing licensure, their employer, and the communities in which they serve.
Clinical social work navigators:	Are accountable to patients, the navigation profession, applicable state boards of social work licensure, their employer, and the communities in which they serve.
Patient navigators:	Are accountable to patients, the navigation profession, their employer, and the communities in which they serve.
Education	
Clinical nurse navigators:	Have at least a bachelor's degree in nursing from an accredited university.
Clinical social work navigators:	Have at least a master's degree in social work from an accredited university.
Patient navigators:	Ideally have at least a bachelor's degree in a health-related field from an accredited university. Specific community navigation needs may allow for variance in these qualifications.
Licensure	
Clinical nurse navigators:	Comply with registered nurse licensing and certification requirements and the scope of practice as defined by the state(s) or jurisdiction(s) in which they practice. An advanced practice registered nurse has additional education and certification required for licensure as determined by the state(s) or jurisdiction(s) in which they practice.
Clinical social work navigators:	Comply with licensing and certification requirements and the scope of practice as defined by the state(s) or jurisdiction(s) in which they practice. A general social work license is required for basic navigation interventions. A clinical social work license (or in some jurisdictions a general social work license with supervision from a clinically licensed social worker) is required for clinical interventions such as diagnosis of mental and behavioral health conditions or the provision of psychotherapy.
Patient navigators:	Do not currently have licensure requirements.
Training and Continuing Education	
Clinical nurse navigators:	Have prior oncology-related educational and employment experience. Pursue continuing education per state licensure requirements. Seek oncology-specific training opportunities. Ideally have navigation certification or complete at least 36 hours of oncology-specific continuing education over a 3-year period. Ideally have oncology specialty certification.
Clinical social work navigators:	Have prior oncology-related educational and employment experience. Pursue continuing education per state licensure requirements. Seek oncology-specific training opportunities. Ideally have navigation certification or complete at least 36 hours of oncology-specific continuing education over a 3-year period. Ideally have oncology specialty certification.
Patient navigators:	Ideally have prior oncology-related educational and employment experience. Complete competency-based navigation training sessions or courses. Ideally have navigation certification or complete at least 36 hours of oncology-specific continuing education in a 3-year period.

Standard 3: Knowledge Oncology navigators have and continue to seek knowledge that reflects current navigation practice.	
All navigators:	<p>Demonstrate and maintain a working knowledge of evidence-based information to ensure the quality of navigation practice.</p> <p>Integrate evidence and research findings into their practice.</p> <p>Seek supervision, consultation, and continuing professional development to ensure career-long learning.</p> <p>Collaborate with other healthcare and services providers to refer patients when the patient's needs are beyond the knowledge base or scope of practice of the navigator.</p> <p>Continuously seek and demonstrate knowledge*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach and prevention • Coordination of care/care transitions • Patient advocacy/patient empowerment • Psychosocial support services/assessment (including integrative and complementary cancer care) • Survivorship/end of life • Professional roles and responsibilities • Operations management/organizational development/healthcare economics • Research/evidence-based practice • Quality improvement/performance improvement <p>*For more information see Appendix.</p>
Clinical nurse navigators:	<p>Attain knowledge and competence that reflect current nursing practice, oncology care, and navigation practice.</p> <p>Use the nursing process when providing oncology navigation services.</p>
Clinical social work navigators:	<p>Attain knowledge and competence that reflect current social work practice, oncology care, and navigation practice.</p> <p>Use the social work process when providing oncology navigation services.</p>

Standard 4: Cultural and Linguistic Humility Oncology navigators practice in a manner that is culturally and linguistically humble and inclusive.	
All navigators:	<p>Understand and support National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care (see Appendix).</p> <p>Understand how systems of power and privilege inequitably affect patients' ability to access services as well as their physical, mental, social, and spiritual health and overall well-being and health outcomes.</p> <p>Demonstrate cultural humility, sensitivity, and responsiveness to diverse patient populations, including but not limited to diversity in gender/gender identity, age, culture, race, ethnicity, religion, abilities, and sexual orientation.</p> <p>Continuously seek to gain knowledge to provide culturally appropriate and affirming navigation services.</p> <p>Implement culturally and linguistically appropriate support programs, services, and interventions.</p> <p>Contribute to navigation research by applying ethical and culturally appropriate practices resulting in improved reliability and validity of study outcomes.</p> <p>Understand unique cultural practices that contribute to healing and those that interfere with recovery.</p> <p>Identify effective and respectful cultural strategies to address stress and distress.</p>

Standard 5: Interdisciplinary and Interorganizational Collaboration Oncology navigators collaborate with patients and their loved ones and all members of the healthcare team.	
All navigators:	<p>View the patient as the center of the team (whether healthcare, community-based, nonprofit, etc). Promote collaboration and communication among healthcare team members, other colleagues, and organizations to promote and protect the best interests of patients.</p> <p>Continuously seek to learn, understand, and interact appropriately with different members of the healthcare team.</p> <p>Ensure that the navigation role and responsibilities are clearly delineated and communicated to members of the healthcare team.</p> <p>Advocate with and/or on behalf of patients with members of the healthcare team.</p> <p>Work to continuously improve organizational culture and care processes to enhance communication in the best interests of patients.</p> <p>Work with other health professionals to establish and maintain a climate of mutual respect, humility, dignity, diversity, ethical integrity, and trust.</p> <p>Participate in interprofessional teams to provide patient care that is safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable.</p> <p>Collaborate with patients and caregivers, the interprofessional team, and community resources in the conduct of appropriate navigation practice.</p> <p>Communicate effectively with navigator colleagues, health professionals, and health-related agencies to promote navigation services.</p> <p>Educate patients and caregivers on the interdisciplinary nature of cancer treatment, the roles of team members, and what to expect from the healthcare system as well as community resources.</p>

Standard 6: Communication Oncology navigators communicate effectively in all areas of practice.	
All navigators:	<p>Tailor communication based on the educational, developmental, and health literacy level of the patient.</p> <p>Communicate effectively to ensure patient safety and satisfaction.</p> <p>Communicate effectively to advocate with and on behalf of patients.</p> <p>Support patient motivation and skills in self-management.</p> <p>Apply insight and understanding concerning human emotional response and development to create and maintain positive interpersonal interactions leading to trust and collaboration between the patient and the healthcare team.</p> <p>Communicate effectively in a variety of formats in all domains of practice.</p> <p>Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public to build trusting relationships across a broad range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.</p>

Standard 7: Professional Development Oncology navigators seek professional development to ensure up-to-date practice knowledge.	
All navigators:	<p>Assume personal responsibility for professional development to gain and maintain knowledge in the best interest of patients.</p> <p>Engage in ongoing professional development to strive for improved competence within their scope of practice.</p> <p>Reflect on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to identify professional practice gaps and incorporate the principles of professional development and life-long learning to address these gaps.</p> <p>Seek new knowledge and competence that reflect the current state of oncology navigation and cancer care and promotes critical and future thinking.</p>

Standard 8: Supervision
When tasked with supervision, oncology navigators provide high-quality supervision to others in the professional setting.

All supervising navigators:	<p>Have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise, or consult appropriately, and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.</p> <p>Exhibit current and ongoing knowledge of the disciplines of employees they supervise, including relevant information regarding statutes, licensure, regulation, certification, etc.</p> <p>Adhere to ethical supervisory practice, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in fair and respectful interactions and evaluations • Creation of positive working and learning environments • Encouragement of professional development <p>Take reasonable steps to arrange for professional development opportunities for any staff they supervise.</p> <p>Review and implement peer evaluation processes.</p>
Clinical nurse navigators:	Evaluate their own nursing practice in relation to professional practice standards and guidelines, relevant statutes, rules, and regulations.
Clinical social work navigators:	Evaluate their own social work practice in relation to professional practice standards and guidelines, relevant statutes, rules, and regulations. May supervise social workers to obtain clinical hours needed for initial licensure in accordance with state/jurisdiction law.

Standard 9: Mentorship and Leadership
Oncology navigators lead within the professional practice setting and the profession.

All navigators:	<p>Pursue leadership opportunities within their employer organization, professional bodies, and nonprofit organizations.</p> <p>Participate in peer and colleague mentorship relationships to develop and support the navigation role.</p> <p>Seek out and nurture relationships with relevant higher education programs (such as nursing, social work, public health, etc) to encourage interest in healthcare and oncology social work and navigation, arrange field placements, joint research projects, and collaborative continuing education activities.</p> <p>Protect and promote the profession of oncology navigation.</p>
Clinical nurse navigators:	Mentor and/or lead in the practice setting and in the nursing and navigation professions.
Clinical social work navigators:	Mentor and/or lead in the practice setting and in the social work and navigation professions.
Patient navigators:	Mentor and/or lead in the practice setting and in navigation professions.

Standard 10: Self-Care
Oncology navigators practice self-care principles to support their own physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health and to reduce stress, mitigate compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and burnout.

All navigators:	<p>Acknowledge self-care as an ethical responsibility.</p> <p>Acknowledge and identify personal and professional stressors.</p> <p>Demonstrate healthy coping mechanisms to respond to stress.</p> <p>seek assistance (including employer-provided programs) when signs of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and/or burnout begin to show.</p> <p>Implement self-care practices into daily routines to build resilience.</p> <p>Practice emotional and physical rest and nourishment.</p> <p>Lead and promote the development of a workplace environment that emphasizes health promotion for employees.</p>
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Standard 11: Prevention, Screening, and Assessment Oncology navigators provide education on cancer prevention, screening, and assessment.	
All navigators:	<p>Exhibit knowledge about, promote, and advocate cancer prevention behaviors, early detection, screening, and healthy behavior education.</p> <p>Exhibit knowledge of available local, community, or national resources and the quality of services provided and establish relationships with the providers of these services.</p> <p>Assess population health factors such as common diseases and/or risk behaviors.</p> <p>Conduct risk assessments, including lifestyle factors</p> <p>Exhibit (and continue to seek) knowledge regarding communities served.</p> <p>Assist with the implementation of programs to improve access to cancer screening.</p> <p>Employ strategies to educate patients to integrate healthy lifestyle behaviors into daily living.</p> <p>Conduct culturally appropriate education about the potential benefits and limitations of contemporary genetic counseling and related genetic risk assessments.</p> <p>Support patients' adherence to holistic care plan.</p>
Clinical nurse navigators:	<p>Use appropriate screening and assessment tools and methods to provide holistic care plan.</p> <p>Assist in the identification of candidates for molecular testing and/or genetic testing and counseling and facilitate appropriate referrals.</p>
Clinical social work navigators:	<p>Use appropriate screening and assessment tools and methods to provide holistic care plan.</p>

Standard 12: Treatment, Care Planning, and Intervention Oncology navigators provide support and information to patients and caregivers to navigate through all phases of active cancer treatment.	
All navigators:	<p>Identify potential and realized barriers to care (eg, transportation, childcare, eldercare, housing, language, culture, literacy, psychosocial, employment, financial, insurance) and facilitate referrals as appropriate to mitigate barriers.</p> <p>Advocate for the resources, supports, and services necessary to address barriers and facilitate access to timely and quality cancer care.</p> <p>Support a smooth transition of patients across screening, diagnosis, active treatment, and survivorship working with the interdisciplinary team.</p> <p>Provide patients and caregivers evidence-based information to support understanding and decision-making at all points along the care continuum.</p> <p>Coach patients to identify their goals and communicate their preferences and priorities for treatment and follow-up care to their healthcare team.</p> <p>Apply evidence-informed practice models to facilitate the patient's accomplishment of goals and objectives.</p> <p>Prepare patients to engage in shared decision-making processes with their healthcare team.</p> <p>Assess unique environmental, cultural, and other factors that could impact specific patient communities, such as safety of community environments, and employ resources to assist.</p> <p>Advocate for, educate, and prepare patients to complete advance directives.</p>
Clinical nurse navigators:	<p>Coordinate the plan of care with the interdisciplinary team, promoting timely follow-up on treatment and supportive care recommendations (eg, cancer conferences/tumor boards) during each episode of care and transition in care.</p> <p>Monitor and facilitate interventions to address symptoms and side effects.</p> <p>Employ strategies to attain patient adherence to treatment plan.</p> <p>Use knowledge of molecular and genetic testing to facilitate patient understanding of ongoing testing results.</p>
Patient navigators:	<p>Refer to nurse, nurse navigator, and physician colleagues to answer questions about clinical information, treatment choices, and potential outcomes.</p>

Standard 13: Psychosocial Assessment and Intervention Oncology navigators assess, assist, and/or provide clinical services to best support the psychosocial needs of patients and caregivers throughout the cancer continuum.	
All navigators:	Utilize empathy, patient-centered interviewing and listening skills, and methods appropriate to patients' capacity and cultural practices. Provide anticipatory guidance and manage expectations to assist patients in coping with the diagnosis of cancer and its potential or expected outcomes. Demonstrate knowledge of psychosocial issues and resource referrals to address patient needs and interests. Administer evidence-based patient-reported distress screening to identify patient barriers to care and provide appropriate referrals. Remain current on standardized instruments helpful in identifying and responding to patient needs and concerns. Screen for distress.
Clinical nurse navigators:	Provide psychosocial assessment and support and facilitate appropriate referrals for patients, families, and caregivers, especially during periods of high emotional stress and anxiety.
Clinical social work navigators:	Conduct ongoing biopsychosocial assessments with patients to determine the needs, assets, and priorities of the patient. Provide clinical psychosocial diagnostic, assessment, and treatment services to support patients' identified social and emotional needs. Sit on institutional boards and committees that implement and monitor psychosocial assessment and intervention.
Patient navigators:	Refer to clinical navigators to answer questions regarding psychosocial information and to clinical social workers, clinical social work navigators, or other licensed mental health professionals for more specific psychosocial information and treatment.

Standard 14: Survivorship Oncology navigators prepare for, assess, and provide support to address the survivorship care needs of cancer patients.	
All navigators:	Support and facilitate a smooth transition of patients from active treatment into survivorship or chronic cancer management. Advocate for survivorship care planning. Educate patients beginning at the time of diagnosis to participate in their wellness by providing self-management and health promotion resources and referrals. Demonstrate familiarity with and know-how to access and reference evidence-based information regarding survivorship.
Clinical nurse navigators:	Provide and reinforce education to patients, families, and caregivers about posttreatment care and survivorship. Provide psychosocial support to patients transitioning into posttreatment care and survivorship phase.
Clinical social work navigators:	Provide clinical psychosocial services to patients transitioning into posttreatment care and survivorship.
Patient navigators:	Provide psychosocial support to patients transitioning into posttreatment care and survivorship phase.

Standard 15: End of Life Oncology navigators prepare for, assess, and provide support to address the end-of life needs of cancer patients.	
All navigators:	Support a smooth transition of patients from treatment into end-of-life care. Demonstrate familiarity with and know-how to access and reference evidence-based information regarding end of life. Elicit the patient’s values, preferences, beliefs, expressed needs, and understanding of death/dying and spirituality. Collaborate with the patient, interdisciplinary team, and others when developing expected outcomes to improve quality of life. Provide assistance and appropriate referrals to support end-of-life care.
Clinical nurse navigators:	Provide psychosocial support to patients as they transition into end-of-life decision-making and supportive care. Prepare patients for the signs and symptoms of the end of life. Provide symptom management at the end of life.
Clinical social work navigators:	Provide clinical psychosocial services to patients as they transition into end-of-life decision-making and supportive care.

Standard 16: Advocacy Oncology navigators advocate with and on behalf of patients, survivors, families, and caregivers to address their needs and goals.	
All navigators:	Advocate for the navigation profession. Educate and support the self-advocacy skills of patients, survivors, families, and caregivers. Participate in, advocate for, and/or lead efforts to improve or enhance services and resources for patients. Educate patients on their rights and preferences and ensure they can participate in the decision-making process throughout the cancer continuum. Educate patients on their rights and preferences and advocate for their participation in the decision-making process throughout their care and into end-of-life care. Work with patients to identify and communicate their goals, preferences, and values to support optimal experiences and outcomes. Advocate for laws, regulations, policies, and programs that protect and promote the needs and interests of patients. Work to enhance the ability of systems and communities to support patients. Advocate to eliminate health disparities and support health equity. Articulate (through a nurse, social work, or navigation perspective) issues concerning healthcare delivery to decision makers within healthcare organizations and other policy arenas. Advocate for patient participation in clinical trials.

Standard 17: Operational Management Oncology navigators understand organizational structure and advocate for the navigation role to improve patient experiences and outcomes.	
All navigators:	Understand organizational structure, mission, vision, and strategic priorities. Contribute to oncology program and navigator role development, implementation, and evaluation within the healthcare system and community. Utilize appropriate resources to plan and provide navigation services that are safe, effective, culturally respectful, and financially responsible. Articulate and demonstrate the contribution and value of navigation to organizational decision makers. Maintain up-to-date knowledge on the impact of legislation, regulation, laws, payment models, and policies on healthcare systems and the needs and interests of patients, survivors, families, and caregivers.

Standard 18: Practice Evaluation and Quality Improvement Oncology navigators routinely evaluate overall navigation programs and contribute to quality improvement initiatives and efforts.	
All navigators:	Participate in the tracking and monitoring of metrics and outcomes (with the use of appropriate tools), in collaboration with administration, to document and evaluate outcomes of the navigation program and report findings to the cancer committee and other relevant stakeholders. Use evaluation data to improve navigation processes and participate in quality improvement. Implement patient safety and quality improvement initiatives within the context of the interprofessional team and incorporate new knowledge to improve navigation practice, care delivery systems, and patient care outcomes. Obtain protection of human subjects certifications when performing patient navigation as part of a research study.
Clinical nurse navigators:	Apply concepts of quality and safety using structure, process, and outcome measures to identify clinical questions and describe the process of changing current practice.
Clinical social work navigators:	Evaluate and contribute to the improvement of the quality of psychosocial distress screening programs and other psychosocial support services.

Standard 19: Evidence-Based Care Oncology navigators contribute to the knowledge and evidence base and integrate evidence and research findings into their practice.	
All navigators:	Integrate evidence and research findings into practice.
Clinical nurse navigators:	Identify clinical questions or problems suitable for scientific inquiry, evidence-based practice questions, or quality assessment. Enhance the body of knowledge surrounding the practice of oncology nursing and oncology navigation through participation in research initiatives. Examine and evaluate practice in regard to current research findings; integrate research findings into practice when applicable. Use knowledge of clinical trial processes, requirements, and the specific treatment regimen to guide, direct, and support the patient in their decision-making and informed consent.
Clinical social work navigators:	Implement evidence-based psychosocial support programs, services, and interventions. Contribute to oncology social work navigation knowledge base through dissemination of psychosocial research, publications, presentations, and evidence-based practice.