



February Focus: Strengthening Patient Navigation for Impact

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Karen Costello, MSS, LSW, OSW-C,
Joins ACS as Strategic Director of ACS NNRT



Karen Costello, MSS, LSW, OSW-C, a seasoned oncology social worker and administrator, has joined the American Cancer Society as the Strategic Director of the National Navigation Roundtable (ACS NNRT). With 30 years of experience spanning clinical coordination, patient navigation, and leadership in academic cancer centers, hospitals, and advocacy organizations, Karen brings deep expertise in oncology support services.

Her career began at the Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania, followed by leadership roles at The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Cancer Support Community, where she built a nationally recognized navigation program. Karen holds multiple professional credentials, including ACS Leadership in Oncology Navigation (LION) and Board of Oncology Social Work (BOSW) certification.

As of January 2025, Karen serves on the board of the Association of Oncology Social Work (AOSW) and leads its Advocacy Committee. Her personal experience as a caregiver has shaped her commitment to improving patient access to care and advancing the role of oncology navigation.



Patient Navigation Roles by Level: Entry, Intermediate, and Advanced

Did you know there are 3 levels of patient navigation (entry, intermediate, and advanced) ENTRY

[knowledge & comprehension] is an individual with one to two years or equivalent experience. Starting a new position without experience in navigation and builds on resources for addressing barriers (logistical, economic, cultural & linguistic, communication, and provider centered) and basic Oncology Patient Navigator-Certified Generalist (OPNCG) principles to guide practice.

Which patient navigation level are you? Early, Intermediate or Advanced.

[Click here to discover your Level.](#)

Advancing Patient Navigation published Article: NNRT Workforce Development Publication



The ACS NNRT Workforce Development Task Group is thrilled to share a newly published article in *Cancer* titled "Job Descriptions by Oncology Patient Navigator Experience" by Varanasi et al. This important work provides valuable insights into the evolving roles of oncology patient navigators based on experience level, helping to inform workforce development, training, and policy efforts.

We encourage all NNRT members to read and share this publication as we continue advocating for the growth and recognition of patient navigation.

[Read full article](#)

New Article: Strengthening Sustainability in Patient Navigation Programs

The ACS NNRT and AONN+ have collaborated to explore the critical issue of sustainability capacity within patient navigation programs. Through a series of activities, insights from patient navigators were gathered and program administrators on challenges, needs, and best practices. This article examines sustainability capacity through the lens of the Patient Navigation Sustainability Framework, providing key takeaways to support long-term program success.

[Read full article](#)

**Stay Connected - our new home on
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Stay connected with us for the latest updates,
initiatives, and key insights for the patient

navigation community. Follow along for opportunities to engage, collaborate, and make a meaningful impact.

Join the conversation - we can't wait to connect with you!



Follow our new LinkedIn page

VOICES of Black Women



In May 2024, the American Cancer Society launched the VOICES of Black Women study—a long-term health study, which will be powered by the perspectives of 100,000 Black women in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. The goal of this study is to better understand how and why health conditions like cancer disproportionately affect Black women so that we can strive for enhanced health outcomes for current and future generations. This study adds to ACS's long history of conducting large-scale population studies (known as the Cancer Prevention Studies), where more than 2.5 million participants have helped us improve our understanding of cancer to inform guidelines for cancer screening and prevention, advocacy, and patient support programming. As such, VOICES is a continuation of this legacy and a manifestation of our vision of ending cancer as we know it, for everyone.

As our trusted partner, we know that VOICES of Black Women is in direct alignment with our shared goals to promote equitable health outcomes across populations. By collaborating with the American Cancer Society, you will join over 300 partnering organizations who have committed to make a lasting impact on community health, together.

As we celebrate Black History Month, we are calling upon our partners to join us in this movement by sharing VOICES with your organization, membership, or network using the email template linked below. This message details how any individual can contribute to the health of Black women either by enrolling in the study (if eligible) or sharing with Black women in personal networks. Can we count on you to join us in centering health equity by incorporating **this message** into any communications to your staff, teams, or external partners this February?

[Learn more](#)

Empowerment Hub

- [New survey findings impact cancer patients and survivors ACS CAN calls on Congress to extend Affordable Care Act enhanced tax credits.](#)
- American Cancer Society [Cancer Facts & Figures 2025](#) report
- March 12, 2025: [National Patient Advocate Foundation Policy Consortium](#)
- [ACS ACTS \(Access to Clinical Trials and Support\)](#) Interested patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals can call our National Cancer Information Center (NCIC), at 800-227-2345. For ACS ACTS case for support
- Prevent Cancer Dialogue [2025 Virtual Series](#) (*free*)
- ACS [Cancer Statistics for African American and Black People in 2025](#)

See archived ACS NNRT newsletters [HERE](#)
Visit ACS NNRT's [website](#)

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