

LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The Creation of a State and National Cancer Resource Web Site for Patients and Professionals

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The Colorado Cancer Resource Guide (CCRG) Web site project was established to enable Colorado patients, families, and healthcare professionals to efficiently and effectively locate cancer resources. The Web site comprises listings of resources from all corners of the state and from national organizations. The founders have gone on to merge the CCRGonline.org listings with resource listings of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Comprehensive Cancer Prevention and Control Program (CCPCP). This project is an ongoing collaborative effort between the Metro Denver Oncology Nursing Society Chapter (MDONS) and CCPCP.

The project came to fruition through the knowledge, talent, and time of four dedicated multidisciplinary healthcare professionals. A year passed from the group's first meeting to the launching of the Web site. We learned much from the process and modified our efforts as we learned. We encourage professionals in other states to consider establishing cancer resource Web sites for their states. We hope that by sharing our start, process, and end points, we will help other professionals to create similar Web sites for their states.

Background and Getting Started

A common need for cancer healthcare providers and their patients is finding local and national support resources. An example of a guide providing such information is the Utah Cancer Coalition's resource guide, Community Cancer Resource Guide (Huntsman Cancer Institute, 2001). The guide provides a listing of cancer resources in the state from support groups to transportation, insurance, and financial assistance, as well as national cancer resources.

Our project leader, Kim Eisen, BS, a pharmaceutical senior sales representative, led discussions with Colorado oncology nurses and healthcare professionals on how to proceed and concluded that Colorado patients and healthcare providers would benefit from hav-

ing a similar resource listing for Colorado. The project would be patient-focused and not affiliated with any political group.

The project leader submitted a proposal to each of the four Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) chapters in Colorado with the hope of obtaining volunteers. The consensus of the ONS chapters was that the guide would benefit their patients and all professionals' ability to help patients. After the proposal was presented to MDONS, two additional project volunteers, Joni Dunn, MN, RN, AOCN[®], CNS, a radiation oncology RN, and Frances Crighton, PhD, RN, a urologic oncology RN, joined the project. The greatest challenge remained: An individual who or group that would provide Web design expertise was required. The group leader thought to seek the involvement of a local college to recruit students to design the project's Web site. We presented the opportunity as a way to fulfill a community service requirement. A patient services assistant at the Denver Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Jennifer Wayne, BA, read the proposal and offered to be the Web designer for the project. She brought to the project experience in designing computer templates and working knowledge of databases and Web design.

Certain qualifications are recommended for members of task forces wishing to create a Web-based cancer resource site. First, members should have enthusiasm, energy, and tenacity. Second, members having different areas of oncology expertise to overlap knowledge bases would be helpful. Third, all members should have the ability to effectively communicate and e-mail. Lastly, one member must be knowledgeable in computer database software and have Internet expertise. However, the CCRG project members were selected for their oncology background and their interest in the project. Luckily, the CCRG's final team had all of the recommended skills.

Group Meetings

The first meeting was a brainstorming session to decide whether to produce the resource

listing as both a Web-based and hard-copy product. We wanted to provide direct access to each listed resource by linking the listing to the resource's Web site. The Utah committee shared some thoughts regarding its product. The hard-copy format cost thousands of dollars for each printing, and additions or corrections had to be added as separate sheets to each booklet. This feedback led to the decision to create a Web-based product. We believed that a Web site would provide certain advantages. It could be updated with new or changing listings without incurring large costs, and users could print copies of any resource pages.

At one of the first meetings, the name CCRG was selected for the Web site. The group decided to use the Utah Community Cancer Resource Guide as a template (Huntsman Cancer Institute, 2001). The group outlined what resources should be included, assigned categories for data collection, and determined meeting format and modes of communication.

Each team member took an assignment for the collection of data. The group decided to meet monthly and use e-mail as the primary means of communication. The project leader assumed responsibility for sending meeting minutes, meeting date reminders, and reminders of assignments and timelines. Timelines were set, reevaluated, and reset throughout the project. At the beginning of each meeting, assignments were reviewed

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