

The role of patient navigation in cervical cancer prevention and screening in Texas

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Introduction

- Cervical cancer is a preventable cancer, yet it is estimated that in 2022 in the United States, there will be 14,100 new cases of invasive cervical cancer and 4,280 deaths.
- In 2020 only 75% of women aged 21-65 in Texas reported being up to date with cervical cancer screening.
- The Healthy People 2030 target is that 84.3% of women are up to date on cervical cancer screening.
- Regular cervical cancer screening, and appropriate follow up and treatment of women with abnormal screening tests is effective in preventing cervical cancer, yet women continue to present with invasive cervical cancer in part due to barriers to regular screening and preventive treatment.
- Patient navigation and education programs have shown promise in improving adherence to cervical cancer screening schedules.
- Medically underserved areas of Texas have a high burden of cervical cancer presenting an opportunity to increase screening and appropriate follow up and treatment through development of partnerships to increase community education and navigation to care.

Goals & Objectives

Navigators serve as educators, advocates and supporters of women to receive clinical care. The objectives are to:

- Increase the number of women educated about cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination.
- Increase the number of women undergoing cervical cancer screening per guidelines.
- Ensure women with abnormal test results are navigated to appointments and treated at collaborating clinics.

Methods

Our comprehensive program for reducing cervical cancer uses multiple evidence-based interventions to increase cervical cancer screening rates, improve access to care and increase capacity of providers to perform appropriate management of women with preinvasive cervical disease. Our program hired and trained navigators to navigate patients from 10 participating sites in Texas Public Health Regions (PHR) 4/5, 6, 7 and 11. We plan to expand to three more clinics PHR 3 (Figure 1).

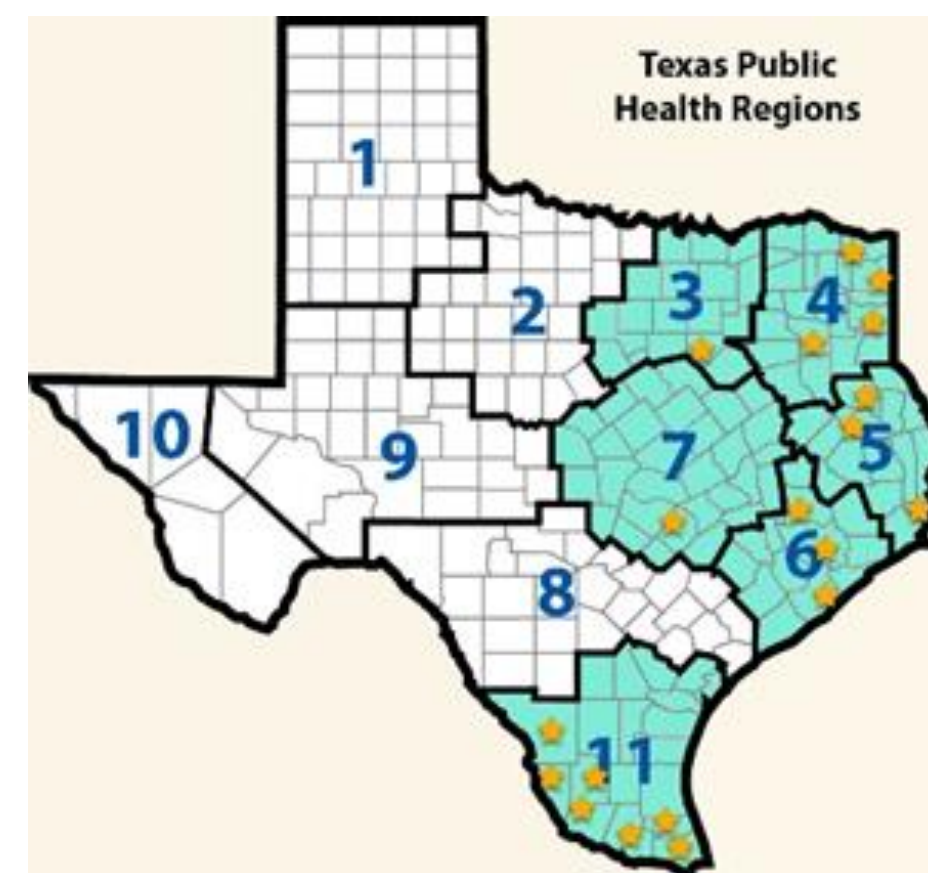


Figure 1. Texas Public Health Regions

The navigators receive ongoing support and education to help address challenges and issues at their sites and to ensure they remain highly trained to better serve their communities.

Navigators at participating sites perform both in-reach and out-reach.

- In-reach activities are performed inside the clinics; navigators provide culturally (and language) appropriate education to women in waiting areas such as the primary care and pediatric clinics (Figure 2). They educate women on the importance of cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination, identify women past due for screening and assist in making appointments and coordinating resources as needed.
- Outreach activities are performed outside the clinical setting and include participation at community events, back to school events and health fairs (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Patient navigation In-reach event



Figure 3. Patient navigation Out-reach event

Results

As part of this comprehensive program, the navigators have increased the number of women educated and have helped to increase the number of women screened. Since 2019, a total of 75,941 women have been educated by the navigators about the importance of cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination. 44,438 women were educated via in-reach (Table 1) and 1,927 of these women have been scheduled for screening services. Our navigators have attended 349 public outreach events and have navigated/referred 2,036 patients from these events to screening (Table 2). To date 35,970 women have been screened at the participating clinics (Table 3).

Table 1. In-reach navigation efforts performed by the clinic navigators

In-Reach Navigation Program Year	In-Reach Navigation Education	Patients Scheduled for Services
2019	10,669	41
2020	19,436	946
2021	14,333	940
Total:	44,438	1,927

Table 2. Out-reach navigation efforts performed by the clinic navigators

Out-Reach Navigation Program Year	Number of Out-Reach Events	Out-Reach Navigation Education	Patients Navigated /Referred
2019	94	20,686	891
2020	129	5,201	928
2021	126	5,616	217
Total:	349	31,503	2,036

Table 3. Patients screened by year of program implementation at participating clinics

Out-Reach Navigation Program Year	Patients Screened
2019	11,767
2020	11,304
2021	12,899
Total:	35,970

Conclusions

- The navigation component of this comprehensive program is effective in promoting community outreach and patient education through in-reach efforts, to increase cervical cancer screening.
- Considering the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on cervical cancer screening nationwide, our partnering clinics have kept a steady number of women screened and are currently on an increasing trend.
- The navigation team had to adapt some events to a virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Navigation is an effective and important component of this comprehensive program to reduce the morbidity and mortality from cervical cancer in Texas.

Acknowledgments

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