

MEETING NOTES

June 2nd, 2021

Remote Zoom Call

Partners: Aaron Flaster (University of Washington), Aaron Morrow (Hopelink Board Member), April Clements (Seattle Cancer Care Alliance), Alex O'Reilly (City of Bellevue), Belina Van (CCS), Cynthia Sessions (Valley Medical Center), Jean Kim (PSRC), Jennifer McCoy (Valley Medical Center), Jon Ehrenfeld (Seattle Fire Department), Jon Morrison Winters (Aging and Disability Services), Judy Brown (Northwest Hospital), Julie Povik (Seattle Children's), Kim Pearson (PSRC), Lisa Hirohata (Kaiser Permanente), Mark Hartenstein (Amboundless), Mark Smutny (Sound Generations), Myani Guetta (HealthierHere), Sonia Morales (Molina Healthcare), Suzy Guttormson (Valley Medical Center), Tara Wagner (CCS).

Presenter: Christine Geneus-Hill (American Cancer Society)

Staff Support: Cassidy Giampetro, Dean Sydnor, and Staci Sahoo

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The meeting started around 9:35am. Cassidy led with the King County Mobility Coalition Welcome Statement, which includes a land acknowledgment.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Christine Geneus-Hill, Senior Program Manager in the West Region of the American Cancer Society, provided an update on her organization's services as they've adapted since the pandemic with a lens for transportation.

View Christine's full presentation [here](#). She explained the organizational restructuring that shrunk the Western region team from 20 people to 5 during the pandemic. Despite this downsizing, American Cancer Society (ACS) still provides more than a dozen patient programs. Many have moved to virtual or online. During the pandemic, screening tests for cancer dropped dramatically, with a 90% decrease. An estimated 22 million screening tests were disrupted.

At the start of the pandemic, ACS decided to pause its transportation programs to protect the safety of drivers, riders, and volunteers. However, they have been working on innovations and adjustments to reintroduce transportation programs on hold and introduce new ones.

One of these programs is their new partnership with paratransit agencies. In this program, ACS works with hospitals and community-based agencies to cover costs for local paratransit trips. The hospital or community organization is responsible for identifying cancer patients who could benefit from this service. The agency then fills out paperwork to request paratransit passes from ACS. ACS will work with local paratransit providers to secure paratransit ride passes for the requesting agency. To utilize

this program, an individual must already meet paratransit eligibility requirements; however, receiving passes through the ACS program can lead to a quicker evaluation process to start using the service.

The second transportation program ACS is advancing is the reopening of their Road to Recovery program. This program uses volunteer drivers to get cancer patients to treatment. The restored program will now have a new web-based platform for patients to schedule rides. It will also make it easier for volunteers to accept rides and receive updates on them. Health providers can manage the website to schedule on behalf of patients. The 1-800 number is still available for people without access to the website. The currently-paused Road to Recovery program will relaunch in select pilot areas in California to test out this new platform before a hopeful full relaunch in the Western region in July. The relaunch is dependent on local COVID-19 trends. As the program opens back up, ACS is recruiting for new drivers!

Lastly, Christine provided an update on ACS's lodging program. View the slides for more details on this.

Christine is open to feedback and insight on how to continue building helpful transportation programs for cancer patients. She is also willing to present and attend other meetings to share more about the paratransit program or other American Cancer Society updates. Contact Christine at Christine.GeneusHill@cancer.org or (425) 404-2244.

Discussion

Attendees flagged multiple concerns with the paratransit program. They include:

- The general need for transportation solutions that are responsive to requests that happen within a week or less time. Advanced notice requirements may mean that paratransit isn't a quick option for someone who needs it on the day of or who could not have foreseen their need.
- Getting registered using paratransit usually takes a couple of weeks, which can leave a patient without a stop-gap option.
- Many individuals aren't eligible for paratransit but still need transportation for their care. Attendees affirmed that many cancer patients need to use the limited non-emergency medical transportation options a region offers to get around.
- Paratransit across county lines can get tricky, and it can be uncomfortable for a patient to have to transfer services if they need to get to a cross-county destination.

Christine received this feedback and confirmed that the Road to Recovery program, once reopened, is more flexible and meant to fill some of these gaps.

To add to the above commentary, multiple hospital staff on the call shared that having to wait for a trip to be confirmed can induce anxiety for the patient and staff. They hope the new Road to Recovery web platform can reduce this anxiety.

An attendee thanked Christine and the American Cancer Society for trying to think of innovative solutions for problems. He appreciated their creativity and desire to fill gaps in unique ways.

Other volunteer transportation providers on the call shared their need for volunteer recruitment, as well. Christine expressed that using community events to recruit had been successful in the past, but a lack of in-person events has made recruitment even more difficult.

Question and Answer

- Will you come to our staff meeting to speak with oncology social workers?
 - Yes!
- What safety protocols exist for volunteer driver screenings?
 - An extensive background check is run on drivers every three years. ACS also administers two trainings, including a COVID-19 safety training. Drivers must also have a clean and valid driver's license.
- Are vaccines required for Road to Recovery drivers?
 - American Cancer Society is requiring that drivers be vaccinated; however, beyond checking a box on their background screening to identify that they've been vaccinated, ACS is not performing any additional cross-checking to confirm this.
 - All Road To Recovery volunteers will follow mitigation strategies including:
 - Completing a required COVID-19 safety training course prior to re-engaging in the Road To Recovery program.
 - At the completion of the training, drivers are required to sign a program waiver indicating their agreement to follow the COVID-19 safety guidelines while participating in Road To Recovery, including:
 - Certifying they are up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations (i.e. completed their vaccination series at least 14-days prior to participating in the program) and will continue to stay up to date to participate in the program.
- Is the paratransit program temporary?
 - No.

ROUNDTABLE SHARING

Health One Unit Update

Jon Ehrenfeld of the Seattle Fire Department shared an update about their Health One Unit. This program is a partnership between the fire department and human services meant to divert low acuity calls from emergency services that can be better handled by lower-level response. The program has been operating since 2019 with two units of weekdays. It is staffed by firefighters and social workers. While their main geographic focus is downtown Seattle, they can respond to a need anywhere in Seattle. The service provides ongoing case management to connect individuals in need with services that can reduce future crisis. It is a connective service that relies on many partners to operate. The populations it serves most are older adults and people experiencing homelessness. The program is adding new staff to meet demand.

The program has received positive anecdotal feedback attributed to its success. They are currently doing a quantitative analysis to evaluate the program's effectivity in diverting people from emergency services. In regards to scale, Jon shared that he can see the model of this program working well but through various administering agencies, not all completely owned by the same program (like an expanding Health One Unit).

COVID-19 impacted the program greatly as many of the community partnerships the program referred people to shut down, leaving less options for those in need. This included transportation service providers.

An attendee asked if this program could assist patients who need to go to the emergency room but cannot take non-emergency medical transportation. Jon clarified that the program doesn't operate so that external partners or people can request their service, but they are referred to when most appropriate by emergency services.

Other Sharing

- Cassidy shared that Hopelink has received funding for One-Call One-Click software procurement through the Washington State Department of Transportation's Consolidated Grant Program.
- Cassidy and Staci also announced Cassidy Giampetro's departure from the Program Supervisor position at Hopelink, meaning Staci will oversee the Access to Healthcare Committee transition as a new individual is hired for the role.
- Jean Kim of the Puget Sound Regional Council shared that the PSRC is updating its Regional Transportation Plan. They have connected with dozens of organizations across Kitsap, King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties to hear more about transportation barriers for priority populations. They are looking for more opportunities to attend meetings and perform outreach. They have also launched their [new engagement website](#) to make it easy for individuals to share feedback and stories. This website includes the link to their open [Future of Transportation survey](#).
- Staci informed the group of the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative's work to create multiple resources related to volunteer driver transportation programs in King County. These resources include a rider-guide, a driver-guide, and a social media toolkit to assist in volunteer recruitment. Find these resources now at [FindARide.org/volunteer!](#)

ACTION ITEMS

- Christine and Julie Povick will connect on an ACS presentation to Seattle Children's Oncology unit.
- Cassidy will send Road to Recovery volunteer interest form out to group in follow-up.

NEXT MEETING

August 4th, 2021 from 9:30am to 11am, Zoom

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE STAFF SUPPORT

Staci Sahoo, Director

SSahoo@hopelink.org