

THE NAVIGATOR

Your Cancer Care Resource



In 2019 Manatee YourChoice partnered with Beacon Advocates to provide its members who are living with cancer access to specialized oncology nurses and social workers at no extra cost to you.

Beacon is an **independent patient advocacy company** that provides concierge-level guidance and advocacy services designed to assist you in navigating the healthcare system and your cancer care because we all know it is not easy and intuitive.

The staff at Beacon Advocates understands your health plan benefits and understands the complexities of cancer care and the healthcare system. If you or a family member experience a cancer diagnosis are encouraged to take advantage of this specialized benefit to cancer care insiders who are trusted professional advocates to help support you through your cancer journey.

To supplement Beacon's support, we are providing you with their quarterly newsletter designed to offer educational resources, caregiving tips, and more.

Have suggestions? Ideas for future topics? Beacon would love to hear from you! **Email feedback to info@beaconadvocates.com**

Have you or a loved one been diagnosed with cancer?

If so, call Beacon Advocates directly to find out how we can help you.

Achieve Better Coordinated Care. As your quarterback, we break down any communication or access barriers through collaboratively helping to promote your strong relationship with your oncology medical team. You will no longer have to worry about navigating through the healthcare maze.

Find Clinical Clarity. We breakdown the clinical complexities of the disease and treatment options into manageable terms. In doing this, we help you become more organized and prepared to make the best-informed decisions.

Gain Confidence. As your trusted advisors, we are by your side to make sure you receive the best cancer care. We will provide guidance and oversight throughout your cancer care journey. As much or as little as you want. You decide.

Manage life with Cancer. We identify and address the whole person's emotional, financial, and legal needs commonly associated with a cancer diagnosis to create peace of mind and reduce the feelings of isolation.



IN THIS ISSUE

- **HPV (human papillomavirus)**
- **Spotlight on Cervical and Colorectal Cancer**
- **Tips on What to Say and Do**
- **Legally Protecting Your Loved Ones and Yourself**
- **Being Your Own Advocate**
- **Yoga and Cancer**



JANUARY IS CERVICAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Get regular PAP tests

FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH

Reminds us to focus on our health

MARCH IS COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Time to get screened?

HPV (human papillomavirus)

- HPV is common and the most important risk factor for developing cervical cancer.
- HPV is spread through sexual contact or skin to skin contact
- An estimated 80 percent of Americans will contract HPV sometime during their lifetime.
- HPV vaccine (Gardasil 9) is recommended for girls and boys starting at ages 11 or 12.

Read more [HERE](#)



Did you Know?

Lifestyle apps can be a great way to help you manage a healthy lifestyle.

Check out how apps can put you in control of your nutrition, stay on top of your exercise, manage your medications and doctor's appointments, and more.

See Healthline's review of 2019 healthy lifestyle apps on content, reliability, and user reviews.

Read more [HERE](#).

Spotlight on Cervical Cancer

If detected and diagnosed early, cervical cancer can be treated effectively. Thus, it is very important to have routine preventive screenings even if no symptoms are present.

Risk Factors

- HPV
- Chlamydia
- Weakened immune system
- Smoking can damage the DNA in the cervix.



Prevention/Detection

- **Practice safe sex.** Reduce your risk of cervical cancer by taking measures to prevent sexually transmitted infections, such as using a condom.
- **Don't smoke.** If you don't smoke, don't start. For help quitting, visit **Manatee YourChoice**
- **Get annual pelvic exam**
- **Pap Smear** every 3 years

Symptoms

- Early-stage generally produces no signs or symptoms.
- Advanced-stage cervical cancer include:
 - Vaginal bleeding after intercourse, between periods or after menopause
 - Watery bloody vaginal discharge that may be heavy and have a foul odor
 - Pelvic pain or pain during intercourse

Make an appointment with your doctor if you have any signs or symptoms that concern you. For more info, visit [National Cervical Cancer Coalition](#).

Spotlight on Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is third most common cancer in the U.S and impacts most people ages 50 and older. It is the 2nd leading cause of death from diseases that affect both men and women, all racial, and ethnic groups.

Risk Factors

- History of polyps (a benign growth in the colon or rectum)
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease
- Fatty diet
- Smoking

Prevention/Detection

- **Get screened starting at age 50**
- **Don't smoke.** visit **Manatee YourChoice**
- **Colonoscopy** every 10 years
- A **sigmoidoscopy** used to examine lower portion of the colon
- **Test for blood in the stool** such as DNA stool tests (Cologuard) every 3 years and can be done at home.



Symptoms

- Early-stage generally produces no signs or symptoms.
- Advanced-stage colon cancer include:
 - Diarrhea or constipation
 - Consistent feeling bowel isn't emptying completely
 - Blood in the stool
 - Stools that are narrower than usual
 - Frequently feeling full or bloated
 - Weight loss with no known reason

Make an appointment with your doctor if you have any signs or symptoms that concern you. For more information, visit the [Colorectal Cancer Alliance](#) or [American Cancer Society](#).



Tips on What to Say and Do

Learning that a family member or a friend has cancer can be a shock. If you're not sure what to say or do, here's a short guide:

Food is often welcomed. When taking food to your family or friend, ask what they (or their family) would like and can eat. Use a dish that does not need to be returned.

Plan a short visit. A successful visit doesn't have to revolve around conversation only. Read aloud, take a walk outside, play cards, or watch a ball game together; these activities are often more enjoyable for both people. If a visit isn't possible, call or send greeting cards, letters, and humorous emails to express that you care.

Make sure to talk about things other than cancer. Share funny stories, or perhaps talk about what is going on in

your own life. Maybe ask for their perspective so they feel as if they can contribute something in return.

Use the language the patient uses. If your family/friend says cancer, you can say cancer. If they say tumor or malignancy, use those words.

Create fun outings. Plan to go out to lunch, stroll a mall, or do whatever he or she would like to do.

Offer to help the caregiver. If you know someone caring for a loved one with cancer, offer to take over his/her duties for an afternoon to give them a break such as doing laundry, walking the dog, or doing errands.

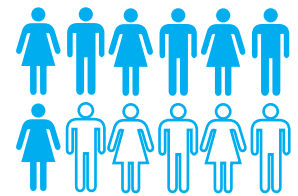
Benefits of Creating a Caregiving Plan

Check out **AARP's Prepare to Care Resource Guides** are designed to help develop and implement a caregiving plan for a family member or a friend. The guides include:

- Information on how to have vital conversations
- Ways to assess your loved one's needs
- Tips for organizing essential documents
- A roundup of federal and national resources
- Information on caring for yourself
- Checklists, medication charts, and contact lists

Read more [HERE](#).

ABOUT 41 MILLION AMERICANS ARE CAREGIVERS FOR A LOVED ONE



60% ARE WORKING CAREGIVERS

Legally Protecting Your Loved Ones and Yourself

Decision-making can be all-consuming for a caregiver. Here are some tips on how to legally protect your loved one and the family's affairs:

Make sure your loved one has a power of attorney for healthcare and financial decisions. These can be completed at any time as long as the patient is able to make decisions. This provides an outline of the patient's wishes.

Organize essential papers into files that are easy to navigate. Such as birth and marriage certificates, divorce decrees, citizenship papers, death certificate of a spouse or parent, power of attorney, deeds to property and cemetery plots, veteran's discharge papers, insurance policies and pension benefits.

Financial help is available. Often individuals don't realize the many government programs that exist, such as Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability programs, veterans benefits, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps), Medicare and Medicaid.

AARP Foundation and the National Council on Aging offer on line tools to help determine eligibility.

Explore insurance coverage such as life and short and long-term care insurance, and pension benefits to explore payment options for skilled services.

Understand your rights on taking a leave of absence from your job to care for a loved one.

Keep all medical expenses, including travel and out of pocket expenses for tax deductions.

Check out [AARP](#) for more details.



Being Your Own Advocate



Your oncologist should have experience treating your specific type and stage of cancer. If the provider is not right for you, continue interviewing others until you find one you trust. It is critical to be assertive during your cancer journey. If you can express your wishes, questions, and

needs clearly and directly, your cancer care experience and the quality of care you receive will be improved.

When interviewing cancer care providers

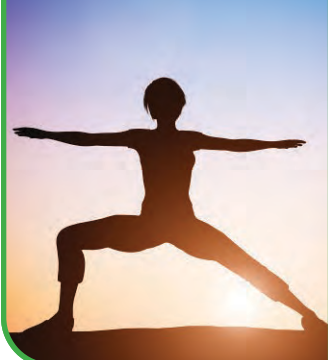
- Discuss your past medical history, your symptoms leading to your diagnosis, and your cancer experience to date.
- Ask the provider about ALL the treatment options he/she suggests for you.

- Ask the provider about their specific experience in treating your specific type and stage of cancer.
- What treatments are recommended and why?
- What risks are involved with this type of treatment?
- Be aware if the provider doesn't appear to answer your questions, or is dismissive to you or your loved one.

Even after you have started to work with a health care provider, you have the right to make a change if you have concerns. You can ask questions and expect to get answers and are allowed to get second opinions – You have the power to make the choices that are best for you. Practicing being assertive can make a big difference.

Remember, you also have a health care benefit that allows you access to independent professional oncology nurses and social workers who will listen, guide, and advocate for you to get the best cancer care while providing peace of mind.

Yoga and Cancer



Yoga isn't just for the athletic and young. Most medical professionals agree that a yoga practice can offer real benefits to cancer patients. Here's why:

- Yoga provides exercise benefits, lowers blood pressure, and decreases levels of stress. This is excellent news for the person undergoing cancer treatment who may be worrying about prognosis, body changes after surgery, and more. The decrease in stress level alone is likely a good enough reason for patients to adopt a yoga practice.
- The emotional side effects of cancer treatment can be debilitating. For a person prone to depression, yoga can serve as a vital part of their healing process. It also has been shown to decrease anxiety and distress.

So how does one start a yoga practice? It's simple. Find a local yoga class or even stream one online. Though yoga carries a low risk of injury, be sure to practice safely.

For more information about yoga and its benefits for cancer patients, visit [HERE](#).



At Beacon, our singular mission is to guide you through the entire experience to ensure you receive the best cancer care available. Each engagement is tailored to meet your unique needs. As 'insiders' who know how to navigate the healthcare system, Beacon Advocates combines principles of case management with clinical oncology expertise to identify, review, and stay abreast of the latest science to guide and advocate for you.

Check out our latest video on how we can help. [HERE](#)

Among the ways Beacon Advocates can assist you:

- Eliminate barriers to the best care
- Navigate the complexities of cancer care within the healthcare maze
- Provide peace of mind
- Understand insurance benefits and reduce access barriers
- Understand disease and treatment options
- Develop a list of questions to discuss with your medical team
- Compare planned treatments to scientific (evidence-based) clinical treatment guidelines
- Research clinical treatment and clinical trials
- Guide through changes in treatment regimens
- Review and organize medical records and bills
- Coordinate all or parts of cancer care



For more information, call 855-490-8777 or visit BeaconAdvocates.com