

CAREGIVER NAVIGATION PILOT PROGRAM

“There are four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers.”

- Rosalynn Carter, former first lady of the United States
and founder of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers

PILOT PROGRAM LENGTH: August 2020 – April 2023



34% Care recipient
reduction in
hospitalizations



10% Care recipient
reduction in
ER visits



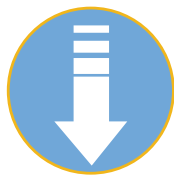
30% Caregiver
reduction in
hospitalizations



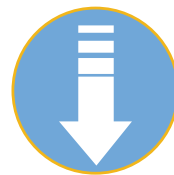
43% Caregiver
reduction in
ER visit



Depression Scale



Caregiver Anxiety Scale



Caregiver Burden



Caregiver
Resilience Scale



510 pre-intervention
surveys completed



171 post-intervention
surveys completed

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Rosalynn Carter, former first lady of the United States and founder of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers stated, “There are four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers.” The sheer magnitude of that statement is only now coming into focus as many baby boomers are facing illness and limited mobility and need some form of care. But not all caregiving relationships are between aging couples. Many caregivers are younger parents with disabled children, or are parents of children impacted by addiction or living with a mental illness, and many are even neighbors or friends of an individual with no immediate family to care for them.

In 2020, The Hospital Association of Southern California engaged VCCF to develop a Caregiver Navigator Pilot Program to provide and analyze the impact of caregiver support. Community Memorial Healthcare in Ventura, St. John’s Regional Medical

Center in Oxnard and the Simi Valley Hospital created caregiver navigator positions offering direct support to families and friends caring for a loved one. VCCF further enlisted California State University, Channel Islands to develop and oversee the assessment and data collection that will be critical in demonstrating the necessity for this initiative to continue beyond the pilot’s schedule. Key community partners, such as Camarillo Health Care District and Ventura County Area Agency on Aging have been integral to the success of this Initiative.

The short-term goal of the initiative is to demonstrate the value of caregiver navigation as it promises to reduce emergency department and hospital readmissions, reduce caregiver anxiety, depression and burden, and integrate caregivers into the healthcare team to improve collaboration and communication with primary care physicians. The long-term goal is to establish caregiver navigation as a permanent program in Ventura County and beyond.

“Everyone who reads this will someday be, or need, a caregiver. Let’s build a lasting support system to ensure that the experience is joyful and healthy for all.”

Janice Aharon-Ezer, LMFT, is the caregiver navigator at Community Memorial Healthcare in Ventura. Janice was instrumental in the design of the program as it exists in the county today. “The program is in its second year and to date, we have worked with more than 325 caregivers and families to help them connect with various resources including respite care, supplies, mental health support, nutrition and emotional support. The CMH program is highly customized to address a wide range of needs. For many of the caregivers, simply knowing they are not alone is a huge relief.” The caregiver navigator typically works with a caregiver for a period of 90 days or as long as needed until the caregiver and patient are stable. Throughout the period of care, they meet by phone, Zoom, or in-person. The flexibility offered allows caregivers who are coordinating care from a distance to feel connected and cared for as well.

Janice, together with Maureen Hodge, program manager of high-risk programs at CMH, has mapped out an extensive network of resources, programs and partners that form the backbone of the Caregiver Collaborative. Their team works closely with the medical staff in the hospital and 22 Community Clinics to ensure that anyone who needs the caregiver program has access to it. “This program is free and there are no limits based on insurance. We want to ensure everyone who needs caregiver support has access to our program,” stated Janice.

In the two years the caregiver program has been active, the biggest surprise has been there is not one “profile” of a caregiver; Janice has worked with people across the spectrum of Ventura society. “Caregivers and patients have been young, old, rich, poor and middle class. Caregivers can be husbands, wives,



sisters, brothers, parents, neighbors, or friends. In fact, it has often been the middle-class families that have felt the burden of caregiving most acutely. Those are the families that are caring for children and aging parents at the same time and are working just to make ends meet,” outlines Janice.

Janice and Maureen have been engaging larger groups and creating a master plan for caregiving at the county and state levels. Their goal is to scale the caregiver navigator program and to have it be available to all patients and their caregivers throughout the county at any hospital. “There is no doubt that there is a need for this and that it works. Caregiving is isolating and sometimes we just need to hear that we are not alone. This program is a lifeline for caregivers and for the patients too,” shared Janice. The pair are slated to speak at the American Hospital Association conference on caregiving in May of 2023; they recorded a four-part podcast series on the topic, and an e-book on the subject has been distributed to hundreds of hospitals to create momentum around this valuable initiative.

Janice and Maureen’s wishes are to see the caregiver initiative extend beyond three years as the need will only become more acute. “Everyone who reads this will someday be, or need, a caregiver. Let’s build a lasting support system to ensure that the experience is joyful and healthy for all,” they shared.



Janice Aharon-Ezer
and Maureen Hodge

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April 2023 Report

