

St. Luke's Mountain State Tumor Institute: A Novel Approach to Informing Patients About Supportive Oncology Programs

BACKGROUND:

Ensuring cancer patients are informed of available supportive oncology and integrative medicine programs is often a challenge. Common methods used for this purpose include pamphlets or handouts, and infographics or panel cards situated within the oncology center. The abundance of information that patients are provided with upon cancer diagnosis and during treatment is often overwhelming, leaving pamphlets unread, and panel cards overlooked.

METHODS:

After repeated feedback from patients that they were not aware of the supportive oncology programs at St. Luke's Mountain States Tumor Institute (MSTI), the MSTI Supportive Oncology Steering Committee explored new ways of communicating with patients. They arrived at the idea of incorporating digital signage in oncology waiting rooms using televisions that would present silent, customized slide presentations introducing the supportive oncology programs available to patients. The slides would include clear instructions to patients on how to access these programs simply by asking their doctor for a referral. Although televisions in waiting rooms are common, they are most often used for standard programming and are sometimes disruptive to patients.

DESCRIPTION:

The MSTI Steering Committee pursued a grant from the St. Luke's Auxiliary Foundation to provide funding for LCD TVs and associated installation equipment. Upon receiving the grant, 10 TVs were purchased and installed in 10 waiting rooms at five MSTI locations for a total cost of \$12,139.63. The customized slide presentations were prepared, and the digital signage program was launched in October 2017.

DISCUSSION:

The integrative medicine program at MSTI achieved a 56% increase in referrals in the year after initiation of digital signage compared to the previous year. This novel and cost-effective method of communicating information to patients may be a key tool in helping other cancer centers increase their integrative oncology referrals. Repurposing existing televisions could provide cost-savings and efficiency.