

## When Cancer Comes to Work



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2016 - Gilda's Club becomes Cancer Pathways

- SAME MISSION
- NEW NAME

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## Impact Since 2001

- 13,348 people have joined our [Family Cancer Support Program](#)
  - 29,447 individuals become member & take part in [Support Groups](#)
  - 20,486 community members participate in [Healthy Living Classes](#)
  - 1,950 kids have attended [Camp Sparkle](#)
  - 6,621 people have attended [Educational Lectures](#) to learn more
  - 1,857 essays submitted to our [Cancer Unwrapped Teen Writing Contest](#)
  - 94,083 people engaged through health fairs, outreach, & [Community Events](#)
  - 66,000 students learn cancer prevention via [Cancer Education for Teens](#)
- 233,792 connections statewide, so that no one has to face cancer alone

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## Statistics

### Cancer Facts

In 2016, 1.7 million people were diagnosed with cancer

Who receives this diagnosis?

- 1 out of 2 men
- 1 out of 3 women

In Washington State, there will be over 37,500 new cancer diagnoses this year

(CDC Data and Facts)

THESE NUMBERS MAKE THIS A BUSINESS ISSUE

### Cancer Survivors

- The Good News:
- Rates of cancer survivorship are increasing!
- In 2014, there were 14.5 million survivors
  - From that, 9.5 Million will return to work
- By 2022 we will see an increase to over 18 million survivors
  - Those returning to work will increase to over 11.8 Million

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## Returning to Work

- Of the 1.7 Million diagnosed annually, over 744,000 cancer survivors will return to work each year
- Typical absence from work: 151 days

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## Returning to Work

- RTW decreases if:
  - Work environment is non-supportive
  - Manual labor
  - Lingering health issues

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## Why go back to work?

- Financial compensation
- Health insurance
- Social support
- Sense of purpose and well being
- Financial pressures determine the time and manner of the return to work
- The kind of cancer you have and the treatment received will determine when employees can go back to work
- Returning to paid work following cancer treatment is a **crucial component** of returning to "normality"

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## Bankruptcy

Medical issues are the #1 cause of bankruptcy



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## Cancer in the Workplace

- Managing employees' cancer related needs more complex than those associated with any other disease
- Range and depth of intense emotions drive this complexity
- Diagnosis is most critical issue for employers
- Ineffective management elevates cost
- Cancer is one of the primary causes of short term and long term disability, both leading to losses in productivity

Northwest Business Group on Health (NBGH)

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## The Bottom Line

- Cancer inevitably becomes a core business issue
- Honest effective communication from the first day is imperative
- Dealing effectively with issues saves money and promotes employee morale
- You can improve outcomes for your business and for your employees
- Cancer Workplace Navigator

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## Economics

- Cancer is costly physically, emotionally, and financially for both the **employee** and the **employer**
- Disability, absenteeism and reduced productivity may increase

- Overall cost of cancer in the U.S. is **\$226.8 Billion**
  - \$103.8 Billion direct medical
  - \$123.0 Billion loss of productivity (*from death*)
    - Does not include absenteeism among survivors, which likely exceed the costs above
- Washington State Specifics
  - 178.5 Million cost of cancer related absenteeism, annually
  - 719,538 workdays missed due to cancer, annually

\*NH 2015, Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

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## Business Issues

- Wages paid to absent employees
- High cost of replacement workers
- Overtime pay for other employees helping out
- Reduced productivity
- Poor quality of work resulting from overtime and understaffing
- Excess manager time dealing with all of it
- Poor morale among employees

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## Caregivers

- Studies show that over 60% of cancer survivors have unmet needs
  - ...and just as many caregivers are affected too
- While every caregivers needs are different, there are common problems encountered
- According to a "Caregiving in the U.S." survey, it was reported that one in five caregivers provide more than **40 hours of care a week** and that may be in addition to working a full time job
- 57% of caregivers had to go in late, leave early or take time off to perform their care-giving duties

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## Caregivers

- As a result some needed to
- Take a leave of absence
  - Switch from full time to part time
  - Turn down promotions
  - Opt for early retirement
  - Quit

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## Cancer & Workplace Discrimination

- **What does that look like?**
- Being demoted without clear reason
- Having an earned job promotion withheld
- Being overlooked for a new position
- Finding a lack of flexibility when requesting time off for medical appointments

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## Workplace Protections & Legislation



- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)
- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (signed into law March 2010)

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## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Protects against all kinds of discrimination based on:
  - Actual disability
  - A perceived history of a disability
  - A misperception of current disability
  - History of disability
- ADA applies to all phases of employment (with employees of 15 or more)




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## ADA & Cancer

- Protects eligible cancer survivors from discrimination in the workplace
- Requires eligible employers to make "reasonable accommodations" to allow employees to function properly on the job
- Ensures that employers must treat all employees equally

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## Reasonable Accommodations



- Employer has to provide as long as not undue hardship
  - Examples: Light duty, flexible hours, reassignment to a vacant position
- Employee generally has to initiate request for a reasonable accommodation
- All requests are kept confidential
- Employer may request medical documentation

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## Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- Guarantees that eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave
  - Can be used all at once or in increments as short as a few hours at a time
- Guarantees that eligible employees maintain their health insurance benefits while out on leave
- Guarantees that an employee who returns to work will be given his or her previous position or an equivalent job with the same salary, benefits, and other conditions of employment

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## FMLA Requirements

- Employee must have worked for his employer
  - at least 12 months
  - with at least 1,250 documented hours
    - during the most recent 12 months
- Law applies to workers in:
  - Government agencies
  - Schools nationwide
  - Private companies with 50 or more employees within 75 miles



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### Challenges: Three Main Arenas

- **Logistics** – How will work be managed
- **Benefits and Finances** - Understanding and managing their health care, disability and other employee benefits, and the impact of cancer on their finances
- **Emotional and Social Issues** - in the workplace, at home and in their communities

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### Questions About Work...

- Will there be any flexibility in my work?
- Will I have employer support?
- Am I still capable to do my job?
- Will I be a burden to my co-worker
- Can I do the same job?
- Will I be accepted?
- Will my identity change?
- Is my appearance different?
- Is there any privacy left for me?



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### Employer Concerns

- Cost
- Value
- Quality
- Productivity
- Absenteeism
- Support
- Workforce re-entry

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## Employer – Employee Communications

- The discussion needs to take place on day one
- The dialogue needs to continue frequently
- Honesty and openness need to be the way forward
- There is not always an answer but there is always a discussion
- Use mediation early and often
- Two separate agendas: Employer & Employee
- Always evolving, therefore must manage expectations

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## Human Resources

### Questions for your Cancer Workplace Navigator

- What can I do for my employees with cancer?
- How do I best respect their wishes when I am getting so many questions?
- How much can I or should I really tell other employees/colleagues?
- What do I say to someone with cancer?
- How do I handle changes in appearance?
- How do I minimize the shock of co-workers?
- What if someone gets sick at work?
- What if it is the boss?

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## How to Help

### –Tips for Colleagues –

- Not knowing what to say is normal
- Your relationship with the employee before cancer is a predictor of your support involvement after cancer
- Ask the person with cancer IF they want to discuss their cancer- if they want to be asked how they are doing.

**Note** that some people come to work to get a break from their illness



- Send a card
- Offer specific, practical help
  - Run errands or cook a meal
- Keep the office relationship as "normal" as possible
- TIP from a cancer survivor:
  - "Don't hesitate to talk about office happenings and gossip, it provides a great distraction from one's own illness. And frankly, one of the best defenses you have when you're ill is distraction."

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## Cancer Pathways Navigators

- We can come in from the very beginning and train employers and employees
- We can work with the employers and employees to help them navigate from DAY ONE
- We can advise and support patients and caregivers
- We are a neutral party which looks for a win-win for both sides
- We can open the lines of communication - the key to success

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## Cancer Pathways Education



- We can provide educational luncheons
- We can meet with employers and employees
- We can provide support groups and classes on site

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## Contact Us

[www.cancerpathways.org](http://www.cancerpathways.org)

206-709-1400

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