

New program shows promise in reducing financial burden of cancer care

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The rising cost of cancer care puts patients and their caregivers at increased risk of experiencing financial toxicity, a term used to describe financial hardship caused by out-of-pocket treatment costs.

A new University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center study published in *JCO Oncology Practice* found that the use of a financial navigator can significantly reduce financial toxicity for patients with hematologic cancer and their caregivers.

The study led by UK Markey Cancer Center researcher Jean Edward, Ph.D., examined the effectiveness of a new oncology financial navigation intervention called Coverage and Cost-of-Care Links (CC Links), among patients and their caregivers recruited from Markey's Hematology and Blood & Marrow Transplant Program.

The CC Links financial navigator helped participants optimize their [health insurance](#), identify different types of assistance for out-of-pocket expenses, or apply for disability or family medical leave among other services.

Results showed that the CC Links intervention decreased financial toxicity for both patients and caregivers, with an average of \$2,500 in [financial benefits](#) secured per participant. The study also tracked improvements in physical and mental quality of life.

"Financial toxicity is a significant burden for patients and their families and can negatively impact treatment adherence and overall quality of life. We are encouraged by the preliminary results of CC Links, which highlight the tremendous impact financial navigation can have on improving patient quality of life and [health outcomes](#)," said Edward, an associate professor and assistant dean for diversity, equity & inclusion at the UK College of Nursing.

The study is one of the first to evaluate the effectiveness of an oncology financial navigation intervention designed specifically to address financial toxicity among patients with hematologic cancer and their caregivers.

Hematologic cancer [patients](#) and their caregivers are especially vulnerable to financial toxicity due to specialized treatments that often include [bone marrow transplants](#), lengthy hospital stays, and prolonged follow-up.

More information: Jean S. Edward et al, Coverage and Cost-of-Care Links: Addressing Financial Toxicity Among Patients With Hematologic Cancer and Their Caregivers, *JCO Oncology Practice* (2023). [DOI: 10.1200/OP.22.00665](#)

Provided by University of Kentucky

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