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Community Health Workers: *Advancing Cancer Education, Community Awareness and Support*

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Eastern Oregon Coordination Care Organization Conference, October 16, 2026



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Total Cancer Burden on the US

- ACS expects over **2 million new cases** in the US in 2026 (1)
- The 2010 estimate of associated cancer care costs was \$124.57 billion; due to changes in incidence, survival, and practice patterns, the projected total cost for 2020 is \$173 billion (**39% increase over 2010**) (2)
- ACS projects the US will spend over \$246 billion on cancer treatment by 2030 (3)

(1) American Cancer Society 2026 Projections

(2) Mariotto AB, Yabroff KR, et al.

(3) American Cancer Society 2025 Projections



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National Breast Cancer Statistics



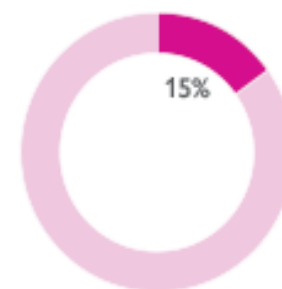
1 IN 8 WOMEN WILL
DEVELOP BREAST CANCER

IN THE NORTHWEST, **1 IN 7 WOMEN**

1% OF MEN
WILL BE
DIAGNOSED
WITH BREAST
CANCER

20%-30%
DIAGNOSED
EARLY ARE LIKELY
TO EXPERIENCE A
RECURRENCE

ONLY **10%-15%**
OF CASES
ARE DUE TO
FAMILY HISTORY



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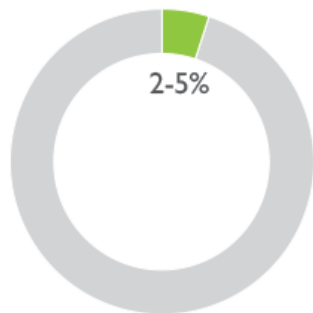


Metastatic Breast Cancer Facts

ABOUT
1/3

OF WOMEN DIAGNOSED
WITH MBC **LIVE AT
LEAST 5 YEARS
AFTER DIAGNOSIS**

SOME **MAY LIVE 10 OR MORE
YEARS BEYOND DIAGNOSIS**



ONLY 2-5% OF FUNDS RAISED FOR BREAST
CANCER RESEARCH IS FOCUSED ON RESEARCH
FOR THE ALREADY METASTASIZED PATIENT

168,000

ESTIMATED PEOPLE
CURRENTLY
LIVING WITH MBC



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Screening Facts



In 2021, 37% of uninsured women
reported they had a mammogram
in the past two years, compared to
67% of insured women.

*Source: American Cancer Society, Breast Cancer Facts & Figures
2024–2025; data from the 2021 National Health Interview Survey
(NHIS)*



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Breast Cancer Screening in Oregon State

Oregon State		
Avg Screening Rate (%)		69.4

Rank (in OR State)	County	Screening Rate (%)
1	Deschutes County	74.5
2	Linn County	73.4
3	Lincoln County	73.2
4	Douglas County	72.5
5	Union County	72.2
9	Harney County	70.8
10	Wallowa County	70.5
14	Umatilla County	68.9
17	Grant County	68

Rank (in OR State)	County	Screening Rate (%)
...	...	...
22	Malheur County	66.3
25	Lake County	65.7
26	Sherman County	64.1
29	Morrow County	61.4
...	...	...
31	Baker County	61.3
32	Curry County	61
33	Wheeler County	59.8
34	Gilliam County	59.6
35	Klamath County	59.2
36	Crook County	58.5

Oregon ranks #41 of 50 states for breast cancer screening among women ages 40+ in the past 2 years.



Source: NCI Screening and Risk Factors Report, 40+ years of age/UTD w/bi-annual (Directly Estimated on 2024 BRFSS Data)



Breast Cancer Incidence Data by County

**Oregon State Avg
Incidence Rate (Age
Adjusted per 100,000)**

124.8

Rank	County	Incidence Rate
1	Hood River	172.5
2	Lake	160.3
3	Wallowa	155.6
4	Wheeler	152.1
5	Josephine	150.6
6	Clackamas	145.3
7	Deschutes	145
8	Multnomah	143.3
9	Jackson	143.2
10	Washington	142.6
11	Clatsop	141.7
12	Yamhill	141.2
13	Marion	140.5
14	Klamath	138.4
15	Columbia	136.2
16	Crook	135
17	Polk	133.5
18	Sherman	132.7

Rank	County	Incidence Rate
19	Benton	131.9
20	Morrow	131.9
21	Tillamook	130.6
22	Harney	128.9
23	Umatilla	124.8
24	Coos	123.9
25	Curry	121.1
26	Wasco	120.4
27	Lincoln	119.6
28	Jefferson	119.5
29	Douglas	116.4
30	Linn	109.9
31	Malheur	102.4
32	Union	100.4
33	Gilliam	98.5
34	Grant	93.1
35	Baker	80.5
36	Lane	78

Source: 2018–2022 Oregon State Cancer Registry of Oregon Health Authority (last updated 9/18/26)



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Breast Cancer Mortality Data by County

Oregon State Avg Mortality Rate (Age Adjusted per 100,000)		
20.5		
Rank	County	Mortality Rate
-	Gilliam	na
-	Harney	na
-	Sherman	na
-	Wheeler	na
1	Klamath	27.2
2	Curry	26.3
3	Morrow	25.4
4	Baker	22.9
5	Jefferson	22.8
6	Tillamook	22.8
7	Union	22.7
8	Douglas	22.3
9	Jackson	22
10	Josephine	21.7
11	Lincoln	21.7
12	Coos	21.6
13	Lake	21.5
14	Polk	20.4

15	Marion	20
16	Washington	19.5
17	Yamhill	19.5
18	Clackamas	19.4
19	Wallowa	19.4
20	Lane	19.1
21	Crook	19
22	Umatilla	18.5
23	Malheur	18.1
24	Columbia	18
25	Wasco	17.9
26	Grant	17.6
27	Multnomah	17.6
28	Deschutes	17.5
29	Benton	16.5
30	Hood River	15.9
31	Linn	15.3
32	Clatsop	14.3

Source: 2018–2023 Oregon State Cancer Registry of Oregon Health Authority
(last updated 9/18/26)



Breast Cancer Incidence/Mortality Trends

- Breast cancer in women under 40 is rising
- Women in rural areas, and under 40, experience the highest rates of later-stage diagnoses
- Women under 40 have the highest rates of triple-negative breast cancer, especially African American women
- Women under 40 are more likely to be diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer
- Rural counties have the highest mortality rates

Source: State Cancer Registry Data, 2022 and 2023



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Early Detection Saves Lives: GET SCREENED!

- In 2024, the USPSTF approved updated guidelines to return the starting age for mammograms to 40
- Oregon Health Authority's ScreenWise offers free screening to un/underinsured individuals 40 and up
- Individuals 18-39 with a specific breast concern can also qualify for ScreenWise with PCP referral
- ScreenWise will be increasingly needed with upcoming insurance disruptions



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Knight Cancer Institute's Commitment

- Only National Cancer Institute–designated Comprehensive Cancer Center in Oregon
- Considers the State of Oregon its ‘catchment area’ and, therefore, its responsibility to serve
- Its Community Advisory Council proposed:
 - hiring Community Cancer Control Specialists around the state
 - supporting the Traditional Health Worker (THW) workforce with cancer-related training
 - pursuing more intentional collaboration with the Oregon Health Authority



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Knight Cancer Institute Community Outreach and Engagement



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Comprehensive Cancer Control Plans (CDC-funded)

- Describe the cancer burden in a state, territory, or Tribal Nation
- Identify populations experiencing unequal effects of cancer incidence and mortality rates
- Identify geographical areas of the state where disparities exist
- Oregon plan offers measurable, evidence-based recommendations for reducing incidence and mortality rates
- Collaborative authors:
 - Knight Cancer Institute's Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) team
 - Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention (HPCDP) Section



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Pink Lemonade Project's Overview



- Mission is to educate, empower, and support all communities affected by breast cancer
- Founded in 2010 by Drs. Allen and Cassie Gabriel, two Vancouver, WA-based physicians
 - Aimed to address the psychological and emotional needs of breast cancer patients
- In March 2021, acquired two programs from a closing Komen affiliate:
 - MBC Dinner Series and Treatment Access Program
 - Expanding geographic service area to all of Oregon and SW Washington



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**PREVENTION/
EDUCATION**

**SCREENING/
GENETICS**

DIAGNOSIS

TREATMENT

**RECOVERY/
SURVIVORSHIP**

**LIVING
WITH MBC**

END OF LIFE



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Current Programs and Events

Community Health and Outreach Events: Education events where we share breast health shower cards and program/service information to increase awareness.

Social/Learning Events: Education series with medical experts that informs, educates, and builds support for the breast cancer community. Meet-ups to connect with others in the community.

Financial Assistance Programs: Urban and rural financial assistance programs to help people during treatment.

Support Groups: Peer-led and clinically led groups for people diagnosed with breast cancer.

Metastatic Breast Cancer Programs: Unique education, social offerings, support, and financial assistance for those with a Stage IV diagnosis.

Retreats: One-day retreats with licensed clinical social workers to provide guidance and support in finding the way forward after treatment.

Mentorship: One-on-one peer support along the breast cancer journey.

Major Events: Mission-based gatherings to celebrate those affected by breast cancer and raise vital funds for the work (Pink Glow and Girlfriends Walk/Run).



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Examples of Partnerships and Impact Work

Screening Partnerships: Connect un/underinsured to free clinical breast exams and mammograms through ScreenWise and Native American Rehabilitation Association, NW.

Latina Support Groups: Partner with Northwest Family Services, Oregon Child Development Coalition, and a bicultural/bilingual oncology social worker to offer a Latina support group in Spanish.

Faith-based Awareness Events: Partner with local churches and places of worship on breast health education and breast cancer support information during Breast Cancer Awareness Month and at church community health events.

Community Health Worker (CHW) Cancer Education and Training: Partner with OHSU Knight Cancer Institute to develop general cancer and breast cancer curricula and train CHWs/THWs: basic cancer definition, trends, disparities, breast health and screening, breast cancer overview, emotional support, and resources for community members along a journey.



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Moving Upstream

2025
COMMUNITY
HEALTH WORKER
PROJECT

2024
MBC RETREAT

2022
LATINA SUPPORT GROUP
2019
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

2021
PATIENT & PROVIDER
RESOURCE GUIDE



2026
INDIGENOUS PINK
AWARENESS

2024
FAITH-BASED
AWARENESS

2022
SCREENING/EARLY
DETECTION

2014
SUPPORT GROUPS

2013
MENTORS

2010
RETREATS



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Back to Basics: Why Community Health Workers (CHWs)?

THWs, CHWs, breast health navigators, and other community-based workers (CBWs) are trusted community leaders who connect people to health care, resources, and support.

CHWs serve as a bridge between communities and health and social services by:

- Improving access to care and resources
- Building trust through culturally responsive support
- Empowering people to make informed health decisions
- Strengthening community health and well-being

CHW programs have been found to generate consistently positive financial returns.



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Popular Education Approach

- **Oregon's training has a strong emphasis on Popular Education**
- **Engages learners and builds trust** using interactive methods that encourage participation, reflection, and action
 - **Examples: brainstorming, storytelling, role playing, and problem-solving activities that draw on lived experiences**
- **Connects personal experiences to larger community and health issues** to deepen understanding
- **Participants learn together and take action** by encouraging discussion, collaboration, and sharing solutions to real community challenges



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THW/CHW Training Project—Early History

- **2023:** A KCI outreach staff member's request for breast cancer education sparked the idea
- **2024:** KCI and PLP identified a gap in cancer information for Oregon THWs/CHWs
- **2024:** We piloted general cancer and breast cancer trainings, including emotional support content
- **Interest grew quickly**



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Cancer Curricula for CHWs

PLP-OHSU Partnership: General Cancer Topics

- Cancer basics, trends, and inequities
- Role of CHW/THW in cancer education
- Prevention and modifiable/non-modifiable risk factors
- Signs/symptoms
- Screening guidelines

PLP: Breast Cancer–Specific Details

- Prognosis
- Signs/symptoms
- Client support strategies (pre/post diagnosis)
- Resources



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Value and Impact of the Partnership

- Partnering a major cancer center with a community-based organization creates a strong impact for both organizations and communities
- Portland Business Journal Health Care Innovation Award—November 2024
- Coos County in action:
 - Summer 2025: trained THWs across Coos County, including Advanced Health (CCO) staff
 - Outcome: Advanced Health added a mammogram screening question to intake forms for the first time
 - Meet Brandy!



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2026 Project Accomplishments

- 3 trainings with OHSU and PLP—general cancer—in both English and Spanish (114 trained)
- 4 trainings with PLP—breast cancer—specific—in both English and Spanish (113 trained)
- 5 community trainings with OHSU and PLP in English and Spanish (66 trained)
- 766 total trained 2024–2026
- Dozens of new organizations and partners are aware of PLP and life-saving general cancer, breast health, and breast cancer information



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Evaluation Results

General Cancer Training

The General Cancer post-training survey revealed improvement in knowledge areas related to cancer diagnostics and screening.



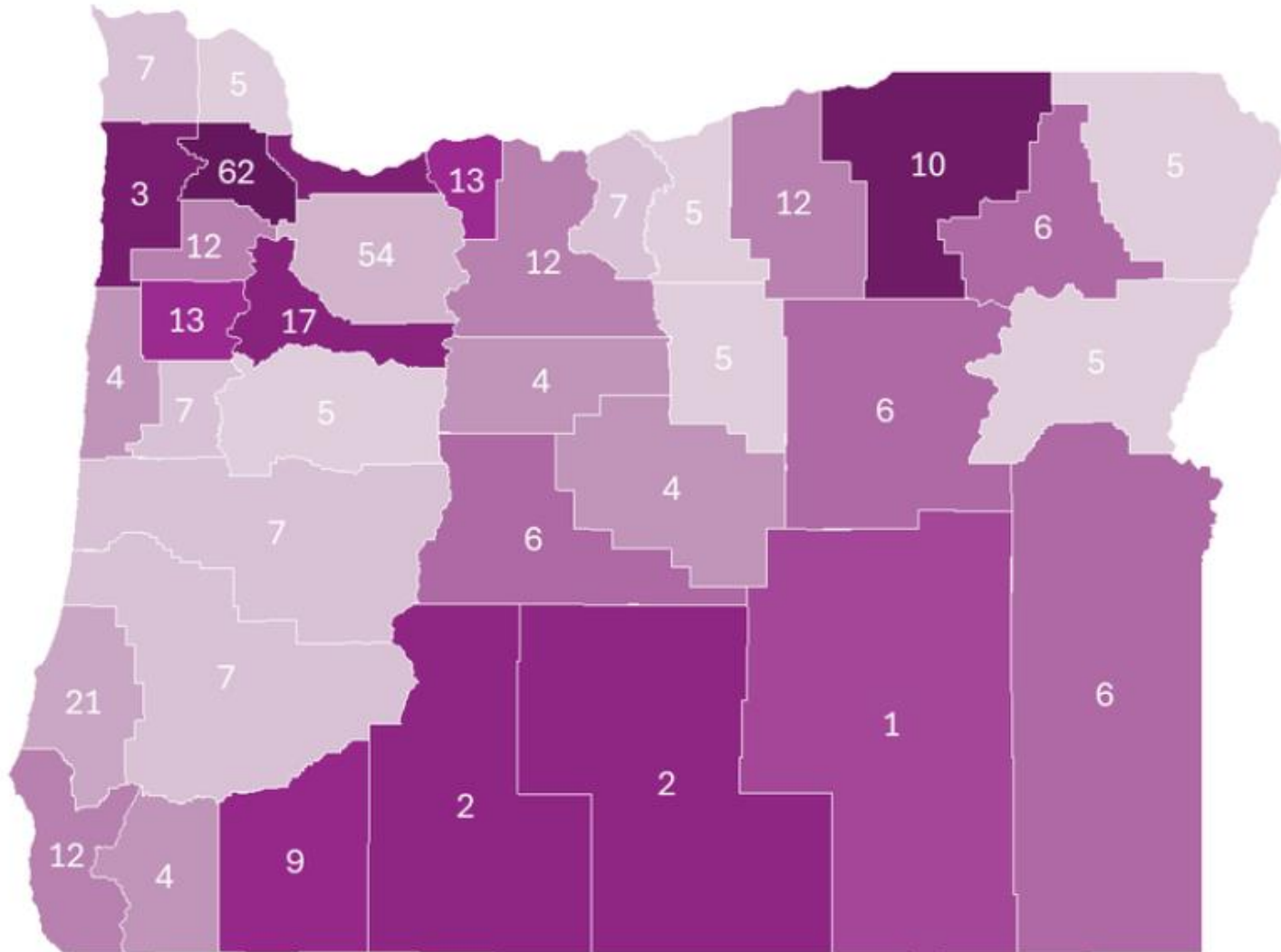
Breast Cancer-Specific Training

Post-survey responses for the Breast Cancer training revealed improvement across all measured knowledge areas.





Respondent Reported Service Area



This project has trained at least one respondent in each of Oregon's 36 counties.



Project Future

- **Train-the-trainer model:** recruit partners to grow the trainer pool and reach more CHWs/THWs
- **New modules:** Popular Education basics and meeting facilitation skills; deeper cancer-specific content with more role-play opportunities
- **Measuring impact:** track increases in screening and improvements in health outcomes



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Free Awareness Materials

Brochures & shower cards available in:

- English
- Russian
- Ukrainian
- Chinese Simplified
- Chinese Traditional
- Arabic
- Spanish
- Korean
- Vietnamese
- Native elements
- French

Order at pinklemonadeproject.org, or request graphic files to co-brand and distribute.



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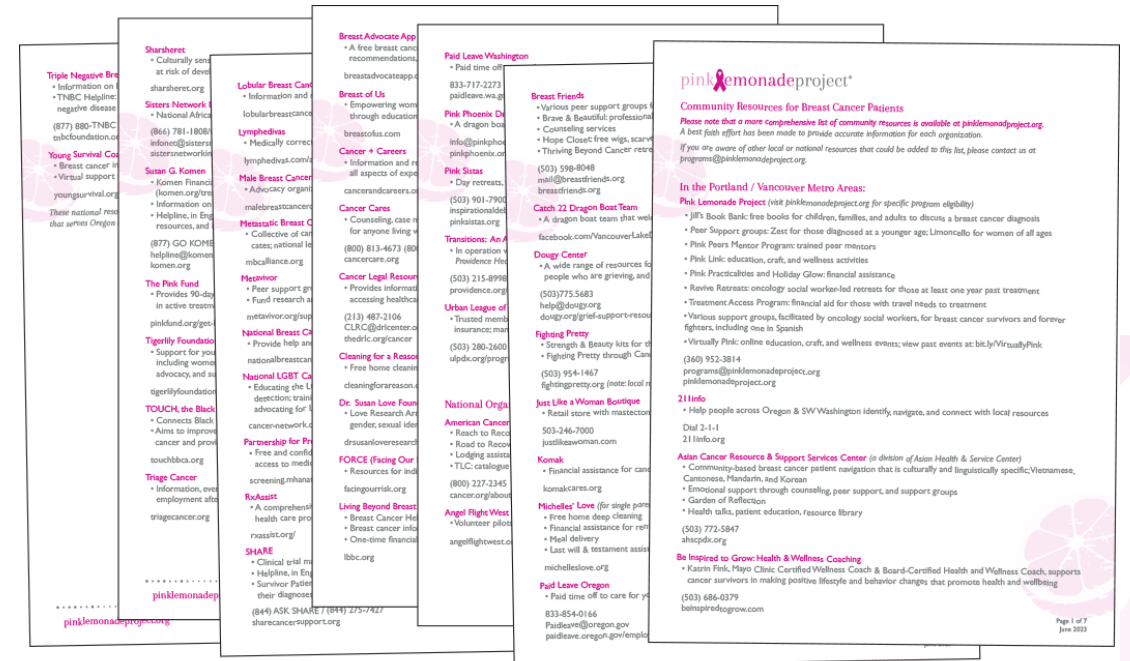
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Community Resources

Our website includes a database of additional regional and national resources.

Some of those resources are compiled into a PDF thanks to an OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Community Partnership Program grant.



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OREGON COMMUNITY ONCOLOGY PATIENT NAVIGATION PROJECT



OVERVIEW

The Community Oncology Patient Navigation (COPN) program creates cohorts of allied health professionals around Oregon to support patients in their communities. The COPN training is tailored to state's oncology health care landscape and designed to be culturally and community responsive.

PROGRAM GOALS:

- 1 Provide oncology patient navigation training for allied health professionals (AHP) workforce
- 2 Streamline patient access to cancer care across the cancer continuum from screening through survivorship.
- 3 Reduce patient-level cancer barriers to care.
- 4 Tailor patient navigation services to meet community- and individual-specific needs.
- 5 Establish collaboration pathways between COPNs and cancer center-affiliated patient navigators.
- 6 Facilitate patient reintegration into home and community settings post treatment.



PILOT PHASE

The COPN program will be piloted in Eastern Oregon in partnership with the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization

Launch October 2026

COPN IS ORGANIZED AROUND FIVE CORE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS



Foundational Element 1: Community Oncology Patient Navigation Curriculum Adaptation

Adapt George Washington Cancer Center Oncology Patient Navigation Training: The Fundamentals to reflect Oregon's unique healthcare landscape and diverse communities.



Foundational Element 2: Learning Management System

Implement Learning Management System (LMS) software to host COPN training, support AHPs, and provide patient navigation resources.



Foundational Element 3: Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Engage a statewide CAB of health care and oncology providers, community organizations and stakeholders to advise on the COPN pilot and statewide expansion.



Foundational Element 4: Workforce Recruitment and Training

During the pilot phase, approximately 40 AHPs, organized into four cohorts, with 10 participants in each cohort.



Foundational Element 5: Community Oncology Patient Navigation Tracking System

Develop and implement a community-based oncology patient navigation system to document patient needs, track services, and coordinate patient care between clinic-based and community-based oncology patient navigators.



Guiding patients.

Removing barriers.

Improving cancer outcomes.



For more information contact: knightcancerCRO@ohsu.edu



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*Thank you to the organizations that help
this CHW project come to life!*



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SPIRIT MOUNTAIN
Community Fund

Natrelle

Allergan
Aesthetics

Genentech
A Member of the Roche Group



willamette
health council



Part of the CareOregon Family



Fred Hutch
Cancer Center



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Upcoming Training Opportunities

- **Breast Cancer Overview with Support and Resources – in English, Monday, November 9th, 6–8 pm (virtual)**
- **Breast Cancer Overview with Support and Resources – in Spanish, Thursday, November 5th, 6–8 pm (virtual)**
- **Contact us if you want more information!**
 - Susan Stearns, CEO at susan@pinklemonadeproject.org
 - Cecelia Wooten, Program Manager at cecelia@pinklemonadeproject.org
 - Carina Garcia, Cancer Control Specialist at garcicar@ohsu.edu



Spanish



English



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