

2016 Public Outcomes Report: Simple Talk

A program dedicated to meeting the needs of parents diagnosed with cancer who have children under age 18

COMMISSION ON CANCER PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) Standard 1.12 requires an annual report of patient or program outcomes be developed and disseminated by the United Hospital Cancer Committee.

Performance and outcomes data are evaluated annually by United Hospital’s Cancer Committee and the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute leadership team.

The data for this report is generated by the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute United Hospital clinic from March–December 2016.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

In January 2016, the United Hospital Cancer Committee recognized the need to offer a targeted program to provide consistent support to families with young children, experiencing a parent’s cancer diagnosis. Simple Talk was established to deliver a specialized program for parents and their families.

SIMPLE TALK PROGRAM

Based on the book Simple Talk for Tough Times the Simple Talk program can guide adults in the conversations they have with the children in their lives about a cancer diagnosis. It also provides tools to help them cope with the ongoing changes cancer often brings.

The Simple Talk program offers:

- in-person sessions with patients and family members
- resources including books, journals and other written material that families can take home and use
- referrals to community programs and other online resources
- Angel Backpacks- provided by the Angel Foundation and filled with activities and items for each individual child
- special events.

Results since implementing the program in March 2016 at the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute —United Hospital, include:

Number of Families Referred	Number of families consulted in person	Number of families consulted by phone
17	13	4

PARTNERSHIP

The Virginia Piper Cancer Institute is proud to partner with Angel Foundation, a local non-profit organization in the cancer community. Angel Foundation provides emergency financial assistance and education and support for adults with cancer and their families.

According to Melissa Turgeon, MPS, ATR, CCLS, program director at Angel Foundation, “Programs like AngelPack, a therapeutic backpack program, provide a tangible resource that metro area clinics and hospital staff can provide to families with children in the home. Allina Health is one of our premier champions of this program, because they view it as an important resource during a new diagnosis or recurrence, to help support a family with children.”

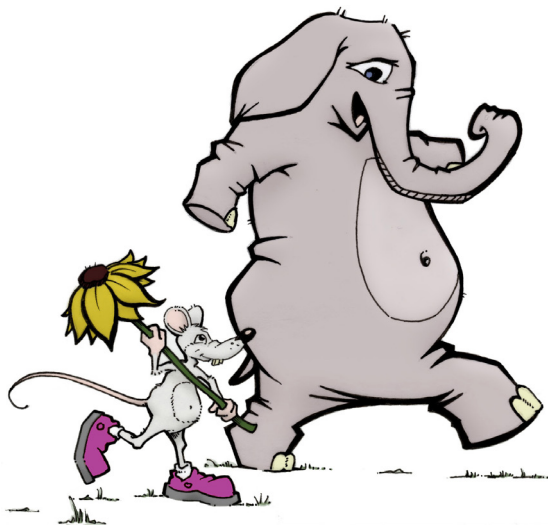
Angel Backpacks Distributed	
2014	24
2015	32
2016	26

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Additionally, Angel Foundation partnered with United Hospital in fall 2016 to provide a bi-annual education and support series, which is a four-week series providing evidence-based education and support to the entire family. Also in October 2016, the Institute partnered with them on the Medical Play Children's Group, for ages 3-11. The group allows children the opportunity to explore real medical supplies, learn about their parent's port, and understand more about blood counts. Again, Melissa Turgeon states, "Our partnership with Allina Health is very meaningful to Angel Foundation. The psychosocial staff has welcomed our expertise and resources, which allows us to support them in their fine work."

An oncology social worker is available at the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute – United Hospital to meet with patients and their families.

Please call to inquire about the Simple Talk program: 651-241-5111.



Talking about cancer

- Share your feelings, but focus on your children's feelings more than your own.
- Put two of the most common fears of children at ease: Tell them, "You cannot catch cancer and you did not do anything to cause it."
- Use the real name of your cancer.
- Ask you children what they already know about cancer. Do not be afraid of talking over their heads. Give them credit. They understand more than we realize.
- Tell them your best understanding of what will happen and when. Children need to have anchors, even dates and times, if possible. Making a calendar with medical appointments noted can be helpful.
- Children want life to be predictable. Let them know that some things may change and how that might look. Reassure them of the things that will not change and that they will always have the care they need.
- Encourage questions, but realize you may not know the answers to all of their questions. You can say, "I don't know but I will find out for both/all of us." Follow your children's lead as to how much they want to know.
- Allow yourself and your children to express emotions. Hug each other, cry, be angry, or express frustration together. Your role is to show that it is alright to say and feel emotions. Don't be afraid to ask for their hugs, too.
- Let your child know that you believe in his inner strength and resilience.
- Do not hesitate to call on the expert resources available to help you, including your physician, social workers, counselors at school and in the community, clergy and others.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Angel Foundation (<https://mnangel.org/>)
- Examples of education downloadable resources from Angel Foundation:
 - Parenting Guidebook (<https://mnangel.org/get-help/age-appropriate-support-advice/parentguidebook/>)
 - Preparing a Child for Cancer Surgery (<https://mnangel.org/get-help/prepare-child-cancer-surgery/>)
- Cancer Support Community (CSC) (www.cancersupportcommunity.org)
- Camp Kesem (www.campkesem.org)
- KIDS KONNECTED (www.kidskonnected.org)
- Children's Treehouse — CLIMB Program (www.childrenstreehousefdn.org)