



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Award ID:
PP120225

Project Title:
LIVESTRONG Fertility Training Module: improving access to fertility preservation information and services for cancer survivors

Award Mechanism:
Health Behavior Change Through Public and Professional Education and Training

Principal Investigator:
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Entity:
LIVESTRONG

Lay Summary:

Annually, more than 130,000 patients are diagnosed with cancer during their reproductive years. The 5-year survival rate for these patients is 79%. However, in order to survive their disease, cancer patients often undergo medically necessary treatments that can cause infertility. Research shows that having children is important to many of those diagnosed with cancer and infertility affects a cancer survivor's long-term quality of life by causing unresolved grief and depression. Fertility preservation is often possible for people prior to their cancer treatment beginning. Advances in reproductive technologies are evolving, providing options that simply did not exist for cancer patients even a few years ago.

Yet, significant barriers exist. Many patients fail to seek fertility information because they don't understand that they are at risk of infertility. In addition, there is often a very short window of opportunity to preserve fertility prior to beginning cancer treatment. Cost is another significant barrier. Fertility preservation is generally not covered by insurance and costs are, on average, \$8,000 for women and \$1,500 for men to conduct any single fertility preservation option. While clinical guidelines call for oncologists to address infertility and fertility preservation options and refer patients to reproductive specialists, studies indicate providers are not routinely offering fertility information and referrals to their patients.

Health care providers need information about fertility preservation and referral sources to effectively educate patients. Further, they must be provided with the knowledge and tools to understand the components of an effective fertility education service so as to improve access options within their own health care systems. The LIVESTRONG Fertility Training Module will create a dynamic, interactive online training for social workers, nurses, reproductive specialists and navigators. The training will prepare providers to overcome barriers by providing skill-building in identifying and discussing fertility risks, increasing understanding of the impact of treatment on fertility, and increasing knowledge of referral services and cost-saving programs. The training will lead to increased referrals of patients to appropriate and evidence-based fertility services that provide discounted or free services. The long-term goal of the program is to increase cancer survivors' quality of life by ensuring that they get the appropriate services and

information related to fertility when they need them.

This innovative training will work to change the performance and practice of health professionals in order to ensure that all those diagnosed in Texas have access to the fertility preservation information and services they need.