



▶ PAYING ATTENTION TO CANCER PAYS OFF FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

CASE STUDY

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We've received positive feedback from employees with cancer, those caring for someone with cancer and managers. The most frequent comment from managers and supervisors is 'I wish this program had been implemented sooner'.

– Lillie Shockney, R.N., B.S., M.A.S.  
Johns Hopkins Hospital

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Employers in the United States spend \$125 billion in direct medical costs and another \$139 billion in diminished productivity and lost work time, either for cancer treatment or caring for someone with cancer. And an overwhelming majority of employees with a cancer diagnosis want to keep working.



## OVERVIEW

Johns Hopkins – among the nation’s most highly regarded cancer centers for diagnosis and treatment – was not particularly good at supporting its own employees with cancer or those who were providing care for a loved one with cancer. A 4-month initiative to understand what was needed **led to the development of an employee benefit program that is now called Work Stride: Managing Cancer at Work.**



## CHALLENGES

The incidence of cancer is going up. As of 2018, 1 in 3 men and 1 in 3 women will be diagnosed with a life-threatening form of cancer in their lifetime. But more and more patients are surviving cancer as well. By 2024, it is expected there will be more than 20 million cancer survivors. Employers are generally best served by having experienced employees remain on the job and as productive as possible for as long as possible. So employers must then ask: What can you do to support your employees, both before and after a cancer diagnosis, keep your company running efficiently, and manage the related health care costs?



## METHODS USED

Johns Hopkins began an initiative to better understand how to best support both employees and managers. This information was used to build an employee benefit program that would be totally separate from an employer’s HR office, and was not a referral mechanism to drive patients to Johns Hopkins. A **comprehensive web-based platform** was developed with specific resources for employees at risk, newly diagnosed, surviving after treatment and serving as a caregiver to a loved one. A specially trained oncology nurse navigator was included as well, acting as a patient advocate and resource, and providing employees and managers with 24/7 telephonic, email and text support. The program was piloted with Pitney Bowes’ 10,000 employees and later launched for the 31,000 employees across the Johns Hopkins University and Health System.



## RESULTS

Feedback from employees with cancer, those who care for someone with cancer and managers has been positive:

- Employee’s satisfaction with the program on a scale of 1-5, 5 being excellent, ranges from 4.5 to 4.8
- **94% of employees who became cancer patients found the nurse navigator to be very helpful**
- Prior to communicating with the nurse navigator,
  - ▶ 33% lacked information about their treatment plan
  - ▶ 50% didn’t really understand their insurance coverage
  - ▶ 37% lacked knowledge of support organizations and other available free resources
- Managers and supervisors most frequent comment is **“I wish this program had been implemented sooner.”**

SOURCE:  
Northeast Business  
Group on Health  
*Cancer and the Workplace:  
The Employer Perspective*  
October 2015