

Advocacy and Collaboration

Advancing cancer prevention and screening

Joni Watson, DNP, MBA, RN, OCN®



BACKGROUND: Cancer prevention and screening is a significant part of the cancer care continuum. Nurses are trusted professionals who can bring stakeholders together and serve diverse groups.

OBJECTIVES: This article describes how nurses can advance cancer prevention and screening initiatives in industry, education, legislative advocacy, research, survivorship, and program development and support.

METHODS: An online search and collaborative knowledge revealed examples of nurses leading the way in cancer prevention and screening efforts.

FINDINGS: Nurse-driven cancer prevention and screening collaborations advance care farther and faster. By creating maximum impact and mobilizing individual passion for a project, any nurse can find collaborative niche opportunities in clinical practice.

KEYWORDS

cancer; prevention; screening; nursing; advocacy; collaborations

DIGITAL OBJECT IDENTIFIER

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COLLABORATIONS CREATE SYNERGY SO THE SUM OF THE PARTS exceed the natural sum, going faster and farther. A key collaboration in the oncology world is cancer prevention and screening. An estimated 42% of cancer cases and 45% of cancer deaths are linked to modifiable risk factors and are preventable (Islami et al., 2018). Others more boldly proclaim that 85%–100% of new lung cancers, cervical cancers, and melanoma could be eliminated through primary prevention efforts of tobacco cessation, human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination, and ultraviolet light avoidance (Song et al., 2018). Nurses are in a unique, collaborative position to educate patients about cancer prevention activities and to encourage routine screening.

In the work of cancer prevention and detection, many nurses may discount their multifaceted, collaborative roles, which ensure safety, timeliness, efficiency, and a patient-centered focus (Blecher et al., 2016; Volker et al., 2011) (see Figure 1). The following sections provide examples of partnerships and cite individual nurses and nurse groups who became involved. These collaboration examples provide evidence-based inspiration to nurses practicing in all settings, illustrating their impact on cancer prevention and detection. The pace and methods to reach outcomes differ, but in all cases, nurses worked together, amplifying their voices to do the work.

Cancer Prevention and Screening Through State Efforts

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funds cancer control programs within every state through the National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program (NCCCP). Within the NCCCP, 63 state cancer control plans guide cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and survivorship efforts in all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. island jurisdictions and tribal regions. Nurses, along with a myriad of other stakeholders, are integral to each of these plans, and many nurses even helped author these statewide documents. These plans are blueprints for collaborations, partnerships, and strategies, based on previous plans or requiring revisions to fulfill cancer prevention initiatives in a region (CDC, 2019b). State cancer control programs offer opportunities for collaborative efforts among comprehensive cancer centers; state-funded cancer control agencies; national, state, and local chapters of nonprofit cancer organizations;