

Study of Quality Care for Breast Cancer Patients

Oncology is a field of medicine that is ever changing and Rutherford Regional is striving to incorporate each new standard of care into our Commission on Cancer certified program. One means towards this end, is the Breast Cancer Protocol Quality Improvement initiative. In 2010 physicians from all disciplines including Medical Oncologists, Radiation Oncologists, Radiologists, Pathologists and Surgeons met to establish a breast cancer care protocol. This protocol not only delineated the path of care for breast cancer patients but also a time line which care should be delivered.

Once the protocol was established, baseline data was collected on each provision of the protocol. To measure quality improvement, a quarterly breast cancer case review was conducted to determine if our medical community was following the protocol and meeting the time lines set. Subsequently, all of the medical disciplines met on a quarterly basis to discuss the breast cancer case reviews and amend the protocol as needed with new standards of care.

Below is a summary of the quality improvements accomplished in the first year of the Breast Cancer Protocol Quality Improvement initiative:

- The average time between a screening mammogram and diagnostic procedures (diagnostic mammogram, ultrasound, etc.) was reduced from 8.3 days to an average of 4.7 days.
- Women who met with their physician in person to receive biopsy results increased from 75% to 100%
- Pathology reports for breast cancer biopsies were completed and within 3 working days 100% of the time to meet protocol guidelines.
- Pathology reports for breast cancer surgeries were completed and available to physicians within 3 working days of the surgery 100% of the time to meet protocol guidelines.
- The number of breast cancer cases presented at Rutherford Regional's multi-disciplinary tumor board increased from 22.2% to an average of 67.1%
- The number of patient referred to cancer care patient navigators at the time of diagnosis increased from 37% to 78.2%
- Referrals to a medical oncologist prior to surgery increased from 52.9% to an average of 88.4%
- Referrals to a radiation oncologist prior to having a lumpectomy increased from 8.3% to an average of 92%

As a organization that seeks to provide comprehensive, compassionate and up to date care to our patients, we are pleased with the results of the Breast Cancer Protocol Quality Improvement initiative and will continue our efforts in this arena.