

# Empowering, Educating, & Supporting those Affected by Cancer through P.A.T.H Workshops

## Summary

**PATH (Personal Action Toward Health), also known as The Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, helps people learn self-management techniques for long-term health conditions. This 6-week workshop was offered in convenient community locations for free. McLaren Oakland launched PATH for those affected by cancer in January 2013.**

**Despite many challenges, 24 PATH workshops were executed, 250 participants were recruited, and 84% of participants completed the workshop. All participants stated they would continue to use at least one of the self-management tools learned and would recommend the workshop to friends and family.**

## Challenge

Seeing a great need to help those affected by cancer, McLaren implemented PATH workshops throughout various communities in Michigan. Several barriers were encountered while implementing PATH. Many interested individuals could not get work off to attend the training sessions. It was difficult to recruit 8+ participants for each workshop. Many people did not know what PATH was and were unwilling to attend due to the program's length. It was difficult to find a method of advertisement that would reach a greater number of people. Despite attending staff meetings and discussing PATH with hospital staff, it was difficult to get physicians involved. It was difficult to find an ideal time and day to have the workshops so they did not overlap and were convenient for the participants.

*"PATH does more than just improve people's health, it improves their lives. People with different problems, but similar struggles, come together and truly help one another. They leave with a new perspective and hope, along with the knowledge & tools they need to tackle any obstacle life throws at them."*

**- Kaitlyn Pace, Patient Navigator/PATH Coordinator  
for McLaren Oakland**

## Solution

Recruited leaders and mentors earlier and chose different days/times for the training sessions. Also, promoted the workshop and efforts were made to find locations that were more convenient for participants. More money was budgeted for communication and advertisement in newspapers and online websites, and we advertised at more community events (i.e. health fairs).

## Results

During the past 2 years, 24 workshops were successfully executed. Overall, there were a total of 250 participants, and a completion rate of 84%.

All participants stated they would continue to use at least one of the self-management tools they learned after the last session was over. The top five tools mentioned were: Physical Activity, Making an Action Plan, Healthy Eating, Sleep, & Problem Solving.

86% of participants said they were given information to help them live a healthier lifestyle, including what to eat and how to get active again after cancer treatment. 81% of participants said they received community resources to help them cope with their disease.

In 2014, the McLaren Oakland PATH program won the Michigan Cancer Consortium's Spirit of Collaboration Award.

## Sustainable Success

To further support participants and determine if they were still benefiting from information provided in PATH, a 6-month follow-up call will be performed by the PATH coordinator.

The MDHHS Survivorship grant from the CDC will provide funding for the PATH program for 2 more years. During this grant period, McLaren Oakland aims to bring PATH to more Michigan Counties and surrounding states. Our overall goal is to have PATH be a recognizable program that is offered for free (or low cost) at health care facilities and community locations all over the Mid-west. Our goal for the next 2-years is to get 200 participants enrolled in a PATH workshop, recruit 10 new leaders, and increase the awareness of PATH in Michigan. If, and when, the grant funding ends, we aim to cut the cost of PATH to less than \$200 per workshop series so that community fundraisers and/or donations alone can sustain the program.

## Your Involvement is Key

PATH changes lives. It is an empirically-based workshop that significantly improves health outcomes & behaviors. Best of all, PATH empowers individuals, providing you the confidence & tools you need to take charge of your health. Take the first step & sign-up for a PATH workshop near you. It's easy & free, and can genuinely help you become a healthier, happier person. You can even take it one step further & become a PATH leader. Help yourself & others find joy and the PATH to better health. Even by telling just one other person about PATH today, you can make a world of difference.



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