

LIVESTRONG Cancer Navigation Center in East Austin Opens Its Doors.

By Katie Ford

The rewards of practicing medicine are many, but the chosen profession of medicine doesn't come without its challenges. Specifically, there are moments when doctors must face their patients and bear unwelcome news, and increasingly that news is cancer.

Though the final numbers have yet to be tallied, the Texas Cancer Registry estimates that this year alone in Travis County, 3,391 people will hear the words: "You have cancer."

These three simple words invite an often overwhelming stream of questions some of which physicians are trained and well equipped to address. However, what do you do about the myriad other questions that arise when a patient learns he or she has cancer? Questions like: "How do I break the news to my children or my boss?" "Will insurance cover my treatment?" "Are there support groups in my area of town?" "How will my treatment impact my ability to have kids?"

As of this fall, Travis County is home to a first-of-its-kind resource center that can address these questions and much more. Located in East Austin, the LIVESTRONG Cancer Navigation Center helps people find their way when cancer threatens to derail their lives. The Center provides free, confidential, one-on-one, in-person support in



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English and Spanish to anyone affected by cancer, regardless of cancer type or treatment stage - including patients, their loved ones and friends, and even the health care professionals and caregivers of the diagnosed.

The Center, which operates Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 5 pm, provides support in four main areas of cancer care:

- Accessing fertility options and assistance;
- Addressing insurance, employment and financial concerns;
- Providing emotional support;
- Understanding diagnosis, treatment and post treatment concerns; and
- Accessing local resources.

"For six years, LIVESTRONG has provided this kind of support over the phone and online; this year, we're on course to assist more than 10,000 people across the nation who have been affected by cancer," says Chris Dammert, the Director of Navigation Services at the LIVESTRONG Foundation. "The LIVESTRONG Cancer Navigation Center is the physical incarnation of this service offering and it's right here in Travis County. We welcome referrals from health care providers, as well as walk-ins. Our doors are open to anyone affected by cancer and our services are free."

The Navigation Center, which sits adjacent to the Foundation's headquarters at 2201 E. Sixth St., is staffed by LIVESTRONG personnel, including intake specialists, a licensed professional counselor, and a licensed master social




LIVESTRONG provides practical, timely support to individuals affected by cancer.

worker. All navigation staff members are fluent in Spanish and English.

Through internal resources, as well as through close partnerships with reputable local and national organizations, the Center connects clients to a wide range of services, from resolving insurance concerns to assistance with fertility preservation, individual and group counseling to clinical trial matching and patient advocacy. There also are support services tailored specifically for family, friends, and health care providers who care for or work with cancer patients and survivors.

Mr. Dammert says that a primary goal of the newly founded Center is to answer as many needs as possible that fall outside the periphery of direct medical care, so that physicians and their staffs can focus on what they're specifically trained to do.

"We are here to provide the right information and the right resources at the right time," Dammert says. "At LIVESTRONG, we believe that knowledge is power. We want to elevate the conversation about cancer with better informed patients and a well-supported community of health care providers, right here in Central Texas."



To learn more about the
LIVESTRONG Cancer Navigation Center
or to refer patients or staff
call **(512) 220-7777**
email **cancer.navigation@livestrong.org**
or visit **www.livestrong.org**