



Expanding Access to Breast Cancer Screening and Education in the Community

Lucy Balderas, Lizbeth Pineda, Melissa Mims, Diane Benson, MA, Lewis Foxhall, MD
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX 77030

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD Anderson
Cancer Center

Background

Project VALET (Providing Valuable Area Life-Saving Exams in Town) is a mammography education and screening program for asymptomatic women ages 40 to 69, who are uninsured, without county assistance and who are patients in participating clinics. Project VALET (PV) addresses barriers of cost and transportation by bringing free mobile mammography to the communities where eligible women reside. PV also provides women with necessary follow-up diagnostic testing, should it be needed, made possible through partnerships with participating facilities.

Project VALET staff train participating clinics in the policies and procedures needed to execute the program, including navigation to diagnostic and treatment services. Project VALET staff also review all educational materials with the clinic staff and are present on site for screening events. This program demonstrates effective and consistent delivery of services to a hard to reach population.

Medicaid 1115 Transformation Waiver

The Medicaid 1115 Transformation Waiver administered by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, strives to improve the effectiveness of services provided to low-income patients who often suffer disproportionately from cancer and other chronic conditions. The federal government, through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), matches funds provided by The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center to support the program's six community-focused projects.

The Medicaid Waiver program offers providers innovative ways to improve quality of care, health status, patient experience, coordination, and cost effectiveness. Implemented throughout the state, it aims to more effectively and efficiently deliver care and provide increased access to care for low-income Texans.

In 2012, the MD Anderson Comprehensive Cancer Control Breast Workgroup was tasked with coming up with ideas for a Waiver/ Delivery System Reform Incentive (DSRIP) project. The workgroup members agreed that Project VALET could reach more women in the surrounding areas with a new mobile van since the current one has exceeded its screening capacity.

Expanding this service to more women who would otherwise not be able to get screened was the best solution to this problem. The Medicaid Waiver program extends the existing Project VALET program by increasing capacity and expanding the geographic coverage through the use of an additional new mammography van.

Goal

The mission of Project VALET (Providing Life-Saving Exams in Town) is to offer free breast screening mammography to uninsured women out in the community via our Mobile Mammography Van.

Objectives

- Provide free screening mammograms and appropriate diagnostic follow-up tests.
- Provide breast health education, appointment reminders and navigation to treatment.

Methods

To ensure the accurate adoption of the program's protocol, Project VALET staff trains the staff from participating clinics in all the policies and procedures needed to successfully execute the screening mammography program.

Project VALET staff also reviews all educational and marketing materials with the clinic staff so everyone is knowledgeable about all aspects of the program.

The vast majority of the women screened through Project VALET are receiving their first baseline screening mammogram.

To date, 1,400 women, who most likely would not have participated in screening without this project, have received a mammogram.

We have also tracked the number of women who participated in the education sessions, the number of women referred for follow-up tests and the number of women diagnosed identified with cancer.

The gradual increase in women served throughout the course of the program demonstrates its success.

Eligibility

Medicaid eligible, uninsured, Asymptomatic, Women ages 40 – 69.

Improvement

Constant communication continues with all participating clinics, MD Anderson's Department of Diagnostic Imaging and The Rose. Response to all issues and questions occurs within 24-hours. All queries are documented for future reference and quality assurance.

Results Data

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Screening services	114	181	318	331	379	387	1584	407
Diagnostic services	20	17	52	43	56	27	346	70

Through a suggestion by Pink Ribbons Project, a former funder, we shared all of our educational and marketing materials with UTMB Galveston Mobile Mammography program for duplication and use.

In 2013, we began providing screening mammograms at Spring Branch Community Health Center, a local Federally Qualified Health Center, in their two clinics: Hillendale and Pitner. We have expanded our services to Katy when their new clinic opened in 2014.

Our partnership with Houston Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has continued since its inception of Project VALET in 2008.

Area

Project VALET is currently available to community clinics serving Fort Bend, Harris and Waller counties.

Harris County

Northside Health Clinic
Sunnyside Health Clinic
La Nueva Casa de Amigos
Spring Branch Hillendale
Spring Branch Pitner
Christus St. Mary's
El Centro de Corazon

Fort Bend

Shifa Clinic
AccessHealth

Waller County

Spring Branch West Houston

Conclusions

Since August 2008, 3,701 women have been educated about breast cancer and have been screening through Project VALET. Of those women, 631 have been navigated to follow-up diagnostic services.

Typically, access to affordable mammograms has been a barrier to women getting breast cancer mammography screenings. Women in low-income and uninsured areas have a hard time getting to clinics and providers due to transportation, unfamiliarity and cost. Project VALET addresses these major barriers by bringing the mobile mammography van to their community clinic at no cost.

Contact

Lucy Balderas

Program Coordinator
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Office of Health Policy
Email: lbaldera@mdanderson.org
Ph: 713-792-5756

Website

<http://www.mdanderson.org/about-us/facts-and-history/office-of-health-policy/programs/project-valet.html>

