

How New Technology Can Enhance Patient Navigation and Equity in Cancer Care

Emerging technologies should supplement, not replace, personalized care, notes a report from the President's Cancer Panel.

February 7, 2025 By [Trent Straube](#)

Emerging technologies in the health sector present opportunities to boost [patient navigation](#) and improve [equity](#) in cancer care, finds a [report from the President's Cancer Panel](#). After a series of meetings exploring the topic, the panel shared its findings and laid out a series of recommendations to help prepare health care providers to best use new technologies to enhance patient navigation.

“While new technology can lead to exciting applications for patient navigation, it should supplement, not replace, the personalized care that patients with cancer need,” said Elizabeth M. Jaffee, MD, chair of the President's Cancer Panel, in a press statement. “Using technology effectively and responsibly is complex and will require collaboration across many sectors.”

Cover of the report on patient navigation and technologyPresident's Cancer Panel/cancer.gov

Patient navigators help steer their clients through the daunting and often confusing challenges of

understanding their diagnosis and treatments, getting the necessary tests and scans, scheduling and getting to appointments, dealing with insurance and so on—all while experiencing an illness and often on a time crunch.

Numerous studies show that patient navigators improve patient satisfaction, speed effective care, reduce health disparities and save money. For a more in-depth look, see our recent feature story [“How Patient Navigators Can Help You Get Through a Cancer Journey.”](#)

Findings of the President’s Cancer Panel underscore these benefits and how technology can boost the promise of patient navigators.

“Patient navigation...aims to improve cancer outcomes and equity by reducing barriers and facilitating patients’ access to care,” the report’s executive summary states. The summary goes on to state, “The panel concluded that health technology provides both new solutions and new challenges and that health care organizations, policy and research must keep pace with technology’s rapid advancement and adoption in order to minimize cancer disparities and improve health outcomes for all.”

The report’s authors distill their findings into four top-line recommendations, including two or three specific ways they can benefit patients:

Use technology to support patient navigation and achieve equity.

- Facilitate patient-centered care coordination.
- Link navigators and patients to resources.
- Inform and empower patients.

Ensure equitable access to technology, especially for patients with limited resources.

- Fund federal programs for broadband access.
- Increase telehealth access in community places.

Promote responsible development and use of technology.

- Adhere to core principles.
- Support research and confirm goals are met.
- Ensure navigators have technology knowledge and skills.

Maintain privacy and security while facilitating data sharing.

- Improve and incentivize interoperability.

- Identify opportunities for a national legal framework.

The President's Cancer Panel, established by the National Cancer Act of 1971, consists of three members appointed by the U.S. president. The panel's report "Enhancing Patient Navigation With Technology to Improve Equity in Cancer Care" was released in November; the panel members are Elizabeth M. Jaffee, MD, chair; Mitchel S. Berger, MD; and Carol L. Brown, MD.

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