

## **The Miami Herald**

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### **Jackson Memorial makes navigating cancer easier**

Apr. 9--A new program at Jackson Memorial Hospital is geared to help make life

easier for cancer patients and their families with a focus on eliminating barriers to care for the medically underserved.

Formally launched in 2000, the program works with community-based hospitals and

cancer centers to link patients to "patient navigators" who serve as guides as they

deal with the psychological, emotional and financial aspects of cancer.

Patient navigators receive training through the American Cancer Society, in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute Patient Navigation Research Program, along with local training.

For its patient navigator program, Jackson teamed up with the ACS and AstraZeneca to become the first site in Florida sponsored by the pharmaceuticals

giant. A program publicity statement said AstraZeneca has pledged \$10 million to

the ACS "to accelerate development of at least 50 new patient navigator program

sites over a five-year period in communities throughout the United States."

That support will enable the program to offer full-time services at Jackson, directly

connecting cancer patients to a cancer support specialist, known as a "navigator."

"This collaborative grant from AstraZeneca and the American Cancer Society will

allow patient navigators at Jackson Memorial to assist more patients through the

complexities of modern cancer care," Dr. Yolangel Hernandez-Suarez, Jackson's

associate chief medical officer, said in the statement.

The service is free and confidential.

There are already more than 80 American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program sites across the country as part of the ACS' Cancer Society Cancer Resource Network that helps patients and their caregivers manage the impact of

cancer on their lives by providing cancer information, day-to-day help and emotional support.

"A cancer diagnosis can be a life-changing experience for patients, their families

and their caregivers. The patient navigator is able to provide support every step of the way, from explaining what to expect with chemotherapy, to making sure patients have transportation to and from appointments," said Dr. Mario A. Mendez, chairman of the board and president of the American Cancer Society's Florida Division. The ACS estimates that 1.4 million Americans were diagnosed with cancer in 2007, including 106,000 in Florida.

"This new program site at Jackson Memorial Hospital is a testament to our commitment to provide cancer patients with the access to the medicines and care they need to live longer, healthier lives," said Lisa Schoenberg, AstraZeneca's vice president of Specialty Care.

For more information about how the American Cancer Society helps patients and caregivers, call 1-800-227-2345 or log on to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).