

Abstract – Administrative Section (Solution to Problems)

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Title: Using Nurse Case Managers to Increase Participation in Breast Cancer Tumor Board

INTRODUCTION: To make better use of the weekly breast cancer tumor board, the NNMC Breast Care Center assigned its two nurse case managers the task of ensuring that every new breast cancer diagnosis before the board. This previously was an often neglected responsibility of surgical residents. **METHOD:** We reviewed statistics maintained by the NNMC tumor registrar. We compared the percentage of cases referred to the tumor board prior to the involvement of nurse case managers with those afterwards. We also observed the new system's effects on staff and patients. **RESULTS:** Prior to early 2003 about 50% of cases escaped board review. Once the two nurse case managers took charge of the board's caseload, the percentage of referred cases reached 100%. Every new case now benefits from the tumor board's multidisciplinary experts: surgical oncologists, medical oncologists from the National Cancer Institute, pathologists, radiologists, radiation oncologists, nurses, geneticists, physical therapists, and others as needed. Much literature demonstrates the value of tumor board review of cancer cases. Routine use of such boards maximizes use of high-quality treatments and keeps the cancer center staff updated. With increased use of tumor boards, we noticed improvements in staff and patient education, confidence, and communication. **CONCLUSIONS:** Tumor boards are a vital ingredient in managing cancer cases effectively. Under the prior approach all personnel were encouraged to use the tumor board, but since no one had "ownership" of the problem many cases were overlooked. We found that making nurse case managers responsible for bringing cases before the tumor board effectively eliminates these oversights.