



BREAST TREATMENT TASK FORCE

BTTF Volunteers: Patient Companion Program

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"I met with a patient at her ultrasound appointment, and it was an amazing experience. To hear her story about what it's like being uninsured in the city and to understand how much this medical service means to her...was very moving to me."

-Valerie, BTTF Volunteer

What happens at appointments?

- Most patients are receiving a sonogram or ultrasound after receiving an abnormal mammogram.
- Approximately 70% of patients will not need further diagnostic services.
- Approximately 30% will need further diagnostic services (MRIs, biopsies).
- Volunteers are not typically asked to accompany patients for more serious procedures (biopsies, cancer treatment).

What happens before the appointment?

- Volunteers will be given a patient's preferred phone number and/or email address to correspond with the patient regarding when and where to meet.

What happens once I arrive at the Medical Center?

- Volunteers should arrive 15 minutes prior to the patient's scheduled appointments, as most patients arrive a few minutes early.
- Volunteers should bring a piece of paper/notepad and a pen, to take down any questions or comments by the patient that require further action from BTTF staff member, etc.
- Most patients use texting. This is a great way to communicate that you have arrived at the center.
- Let the receptionist know you are from BTTF and have come to give the patient support.
- If the patient has already arrived, ask receptionist to point out the BTTF patient.
- In the rare event that the patient is not there, send her a text.

How can I let the patient know I am there to support her?

- Patients vary in levels of open communication, but are always appreciative that you are there.
- Introduce yourself and say you are there because BTTF's number one priority is connecting with patients and ensuring they receive excellent care.
- Let them know you are there to answer any questions they have or can help

them find the answers on site from another staff member.

- If they are very talkative or friendly, you might want to ask them general questions about themselves, their history being an uninsured New Yorker, etc. Make sure to make a note of any compelling stories.
- If the patient is more reserved, you can simply begin with the paperwork.

What is the procedure for BTTF Intake Forms and Evaluations?

- Give them a BTTF intake form to fill out.
- The BTTF assessment portion is to fill it out and send later.
- You will provide the self-addressed/stamped envelopes for the patient and she must leave the paperwork with the receptionist.

Key Diagnostic Terms:

- **Sonogram or ultrasound:** process of using medical ultrasonography to perform diagnostic imaging of the breast. This is useful in younger women, where denser fibrous tissue make mammograms more difficult to interpret.
- **MRI:** contrast enhanced magnetic resonance imaging; detection of cancer is higher than that of either radiographic mammography or ultrasound and is generally reported to be in excess of 95%.
- **FNA** (Fine Needle Aspiration) is a "through the skin" procedure that uses a fine needle and a syringe to sample fluid from a breast cyst, or remove clusters of cells from a solid mass.
- **Core Needle Biopsy:** A core needle biopsy is a procedure that removes small but solid sample for testing.