

Rebuilding the Oncology Patient Journey to Drive Awareness, Trust, and Action

The Real Problem

At first glance, it looked like the performance issues were coming from downstream tactics, channel mix, paid media efficiency, or referral leakage. But when we evaluated the experience through the patient-journey lens, the real issue was earlier: patients didn't know the cancer center, didn't know where to start, and weren't sure who to trust for information at the beginning of their journey. At the same time, the organization lacked content and visibility across early awareness and education stages, so it wasn't showing up as a credible resource and often wasn't being found at all. Without meaningful name awareness, the center wasn't entering the consideration set for many patients.

The “Aha”Moment

Without visibility and education at every stage of the journey, the cancer center simply couldn't compete for trust. This is where the 95/5 principle came into play: Only a small percentage of people are actively ready to take action at any given time. The majority are in earlier stages learning, researching, and forming perception.

CONTEXT

A multi-location community cancer center with 19 sites and approximately \$500M in annual revenue was facing a familiar challenge: declining oncology volumes despite offering high-quality medical and radiation oncology care. From the outside, nothing was “broken.” From the patient perspective, everything was unclear.

THE LESSON

The biggest lesson for community cancer centers is simple but critical: You cannot ignore creating awareness in the market. If you wait until a patient is diagnosed to start building a relationship, you're already too late. Oncology marketing works best when it respects how patients actually move from uncertainty, to understanding, to action and meets them with the right information at the right time.

STRATEGIC SHIFT

Awareness

1

Creating educational, accessible content for patients before diagnosis
Addressing common questions and concerns early
Building visibility and credibility in search and digital channels

Consideration

2

Simplifying complex oncology language
Sequencing information in an education-first way
Helping patients understand options without overwhelming them

Navigation

3

Clearly explaining “what happens next”
Reducing friction and confusion
Using fewer, more intentional calls-to-action tied to patient readiness



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THE OUTCOME



While results varied by service line and market, several clear improvements emerged:

- Higher-quality engagement with oncology content
- Improved conversion behavior as patients moved through the journey
- Clearer priorities across marketing and leadership teams
- Greater confidence in where to invest time, energy, and resources

Just as importantly, the organization began to show up as a credible, trusted source not just a place of care, but a place of guidance.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR COMMUNITY CANCER CENTERS



This case reinforces a core belief behind the Oncology Framework:
Effective oncology marketing isn't about pushing people to act it's about earning trust long before they're ready.

When cancer centers invest in the full journey, they don't just improve marketing performance they strengthen their role in the community.