

## Virginia Cancer Patient Navigator Network is the 2025 Local Navigation Network of the Year



At the 2025 AONN+ Annual Conference, the Virginia Cancer Patient Navigator Network (VCPNN) was recognized as the 2025 Local Navigator Network of the Year, honoring its long-standing commitment to excellence in cancer navigation across the Commonwealth.

Over the last 18 years, VCPNN has established itself as a professional organization of navigators for navigators. Its mission is to lead a course of excellence in cancer navigation for the community, to remove barriers, and enhance outcomes for patients, families, and health care teams through training, education, networking, and mutual support.

VCPNN has built a sustainable statewide network that empowers oncology navigators across the continuum of care to become advocates, educators, and leaders in defining the profession of navigation and emphasizing the continued value to all patients and organizations.

Needs assessments, conducted in 2014 and again in 2025, highlighted changes that have occurred overtime within the profession. Remarkably, the needs of the members remained largely the same and included a desire for a multidisciplinary network of navigators, a need for continuing education and professional development opportunities as well as promotion of navigation within organizations and statewide. More recent needs include expanding the network to reach more navigators in the state and promoting navigation to organizations, patients, and the community as a whole.

## Growing Impact Through Strategic Partnership

A pivotal milestone in VCPNN 's history was its 2022 merger with the Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia (CACV). Through this relationship, VCPNN was able to create a sustainable framework for the group's future, while incorporating oncology navigation principles, goals, and strategies for achievement into the Virginia Cancer Plan. As an implementation team of CACV, VCPNN hosts quarterly meetings and remains an Academy of Oncology Nurse & Patient Navigator (AONN+) network. It maintains a robust leadership team that meets monthly to discuss network business and plan quarterly meetings. Member meeting evaluations play an important role in helping VCPNN leadership improve content and provide relevant material.

The collaboration with CACV has also increased VCPNN's visibility at the Commonwealth level leading to its inclusion in the annual report to the Virginia Governor as well as the Virginia Cancer Plan. This visibility has helped the network reach more navigators in underserved areas, connecting them with statewide resources and a broader professional community.

## Commitment to Professional Development

VCPNN invests in navigator education by offering scholarship opportunities for members to access conferences and providing events with CEUs. In 2024, five members received scholarships to attend the AONN+ Annual Conference virtually, and in 2025 the network continued to provide this valuable support.

Congratulations to the VCPNN for encouraging growth in members and a sustainable practice in Virginia!