

Genetic Counseling

CancerIQ: The Smarter Way to Fight

FCS is investing time and resources into new technologies to better serve patients and families

BY CHAY HUGHES

Leveraging the latest innovation in emerging technologies is a critical component of Florida Cancer Specialists' strategy in the fight against cancer. Under the leadership of FCS President and Managing Physician Dr. Lucio Gordan, FCS is adding a genetic risk assessment software to identify and manage patients at high risk of cancer.

CancerIQ is a new digital platform designed to identify genetic risk factors for entire families. According to Dr. Gordan, the goal is to diagnose increased risk of cancer, preventing its development in a person with potential high genetic risk.

"We hope that we will not only diagnose patients before they have cancer just based on their family history and inherent risk, but also help patients who have a history of cancer already, as there are therapies that can be tailored based on germline genetic features," said Dr. Gordan.

The Details: How CancerIQ Works

The program launched in fall 2020 at FCS's Tallahassee

location. There, patients were invited to opt into the program by answering questions on an iPad or other hand-held mobile device.

Just a few, simple multiple-choice questions later and a patient's healthcare team was able to have a fuller picture of potential risk factors. CancerIQ acts as a catalyst for a larger conversation (usually 45 minutes to an hour) in assessing risks and talking through individual options.

"What we're trying to do is bridge this gap by formalizing a process in which we'll capture a patient's family history electronically," explained Dr. Gordan. "Patients will enter the information via an iPad or whatever electronic format they choose. Their responses will trigger an analysis and response: 'Does this patient qualify for genetic testing or not?' 'What is the risk?' And it will alert the providers to order the appropriate tests for that patient."

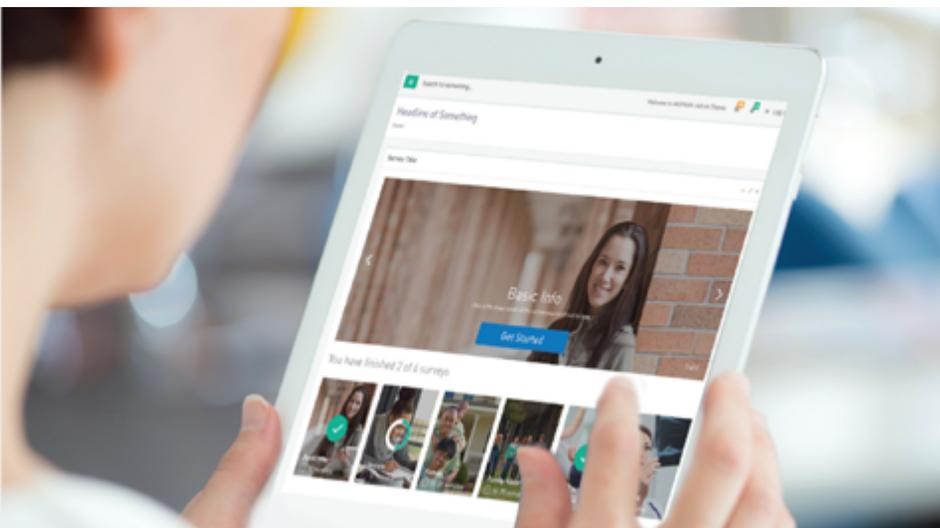
Those flagged as high-risk are referred for genetic counseling, testing and personalized care management by a multidisciplinary team.



Dr. Lucio Gordan



Vicki Caraway, RN,
BSN, MBA, NE-BC



MEET GENETICS COUNSELOR CATHY MARINAK

The software technology could not have arrived at FCS at a more ideal time. With new advances in genetic counseling seemingly every day, leadership at FCS has made the investment to add an entirely new position to the staff.

Nurse Practitioner Cathy Marinak, AOCNP will serve as the organization's new genetics counselor. Vice President of Clinical Services Vicki Caraway, RN, BSN, MBA, NE-BC said the organization is looking forward to tapping into Marinak's expertise.

"I really wanted to have someone in our organization who's done it, lived it, breathed it and knows the best way to reach the most patients," said Vicki. "We hired someone who has a lot of experience and has done this for many years. Cathy and I are going to work together to figure out how to expand CancerIQ across the state."

On the provider's side, individualized data, analytics and a genetic roadmap for risk factors based on their patient's needs will be created instantly by CancerIQ. From that point, physicians will be able to select which additional testing applies to their patient. Panels will test anywhere from 30 to 80 genes, depending on which commercial platform the provider selects.

Informed Patients + Enhanced Technology = Better Outcomes

FCS Vice President of Clinical Services, Vicki Caraway, RN, BSN, MBA, NE-BC has had nearly 30 years of experience helping oncology patients heal. Together with Dr. Gordan, Caraway has championed CancerIQ as a necessity for the FCS team.

According to Caraway, patients today are savvier than in years past when it comes

to their options. Most patients, she said, are aware of genetic testing and are ready and willing to take the steps needed to assess their risks.

"Cancer IQ is the platform that allows us to screen all new patients to understand who needs to undergo hereditary cancer genetic testing," explained Caraway. "From that, patients who meet societal guidelines for genetic testing will hopefully opt in and agree to move forward with genetic testing. What happens next is that once we get the results back from the lab, CancerIQ will automatically flag patients who require treatment changes or increased surveillance for a secondary cancer. It's a powerful tool, and we're super excited."

CancerIQ's cutting-edge software technology will be available across FCS' 89 treatment facilities in 2021.