Delivering superior clinical care balanced with a humanized healthcare experience is the ultimate quality benchmark for cancer care. At Fox Chase Cancer Center, part of the Temple University Health System, patients are offered best-in-class care with unparalleled compassion. This mission-driven culture is supported through technology, access to the most advanced treatments, cutting-edge research, a highly experienced team of caregivers…and afternoon tea.

The beloved custom of joining together for afternoon tea is a tradition that began in 1940. It continues today, fueling a collaborative, human-focused environment that the team refers to as the "FoxChaseness." Customs like this highlight Fox Chase's continued mission to do more than deliver treatment to patients and families, but to provide support, care, and compassion during the most challenging periods of their lives.

Fox Chase Cancer Center had embraced person-centered care principles well before engaging with Planetree in 2018. Patients routinely commented on the compassionate care they received from caregivers at all levels, and staff viewed FCCC as a place to build a long-standing career where they could reach their fullest potential as healthcare professionals. Nonetheless, there was still room to grow and to elevate the culture. This quest for continuous advancement has propelled the organization to achieve countless accolades since its inception in 1904.

**ACTIONS**

- Achieved Magnet Designation for Nursing Excellence 6 consecutive times, 2000–2023
- Guardian of Excellence and Pinnacle of Excellence Awards from Press Ganey 2021
- Physicians Named Top Doctors by Philadelphia Magazine each year (86 in 2023)
- Gold Certification for Excellence in Person-Centered Care, 2023
- U.S. News Best Hospitals 2023: Ranked 42 for Cancer & 13 for Urology
Planetree was selected as a partner because of the unique focus on both the patient and the caregiver. This aligned with FCCC’s longstanding commitment to fostering a culture that cared as deeply for their caregivers as their staff cared for patients. “We’re like boomerangs around here,” noted Nancy Stoots, Registered Nurse, Outpatient Department. “You’re either here for decades or you leave and find yourself back again. There is just something special about Fox Chase.”

Planetree’s Person-Centered Care Certification® framework offered up a means to audit current practices, set targets to work toward, and celebrate the small victories along the way. “Planetree helped us to reinforce not just the patient side of things, but employee wellbeing and engagement as well,” Pendleton noted. Using the evidence-based approach, Delinda and her team quickly pinpointed gaps and set clear and achievable milestones for her team to begin making sustainable change.

One of the first steps was an assessment of the organizational structures that promote engagement. Though frontline staff valued the culture of FCCC, they were sometimes not included at the table with patients and family advisors, where patient-centered practices were assessed and planned. “Discussions surrounding patient care operations lived at the leadership level. In fact, the name of the committee was the ‘Patient Experience Leadership Team.’” Delinda quickly recognized that this committee structure, and the voices impacting hospital-wide decisions, had to include not only leadership and patients but employees at all levels throughout the organization.

And when staff members were brought to the table, the shift in culture was palpable. Today, the voice of staff and patients influences design decisions and prioritizes initiatives. Teams have a first-hand view of the positive results they can achieve and are empowered to engage more in committees and hospital-wide initiatives. At a time when all healthcare organizations are aiming to create workplace environments where employees thrive, this structural change has proven to be monumental. Staff feel empowered. They feel heard. They can make a difference and be their best.
CASE STUDY: FOX CHASE CANCER CENTER

BRINGING PATIENT VOICES TO THE TABLE

Prior to its journey with Planetree, FCCC had an active and engaged Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). Yet they too saw areas for improvement. “We were lacking organization and visibility,” noted Michael Phillips, Co-Chair of the Patient and Family Advisory Council. “We needed to attract and retain members that were engaged in the committee, and ready to show up to the table and drive change.” The committee began to address these concerns, introducing a higher degree of professionalism and accountability into the culture. “This increased our visibility and respect throughout the organization. FCCC staff now come to us and ask to present and attend our meetings,” Phillips stated.

Along with this, the Patient Experience team at FCCC began including information about the PFAC in department meetings, truly integrating their work into the day-to-day operations within the hospital.

These efforts not only elevated the person-centered culture within the organization but were also well aligned with “FoxChaseness”, the driving culture emanating through the halls of the organization.

UNMATCHED RESULTS

In 2023, Fox Chase Cancer Center was officially awarded Gold Certification for Excellence in Person-Centered Care, the highest mark of person-centered excellence. This achievement showcases Fox Chase’s commitment to their patients, families, staff, and community. Along with this, they have achieved leading net promoter scores, a 90% top box score in Likelihood to Recommend, and exceptional ratings in Overall Care.

“Our scores speak for themselves, and I think this showcases our commitment to our culture, and our continued desire to improve and elevate what person-centered excellence looks like at Fox Chase Cancer Center.” - Delinda Pendleton, FPCC