As cancer survivorship increases, long-term health outcomes have become an important public health issue. Studies show cancer survivors engaging in evidence-based wellness behaviors have improved quality of life, physical function, and reduced fatigue. Rural survivors typically experience limited/no availability or access to wellness programs.

The Nebraska Cancer Coalition collaborated with National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, (NACDD), and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to implement a multi-component wellness program for cancer survivors in rural Nebraska.

About Nebraska’s Rural Project
- Seven southwestern Nebraska counties
- Six of the seven counties are designated as health care professional shortage areas
- One health system with cancer center provides cancer services
- The population of the seven counties is 97,492; largest county is 49,732 and smallest is 2,028

Our Primary Accomplishment
“Kit in a Box” addresses rural cancer survivors needs that can be easily implemented and inexpensively replicated by partners throughout the state with a small amount of training.
The Nebraska Cancer Coalition used the Guide’s framework to build innovative approaches and adapted the evidence-based based interventions to address rural cancer survivor needs.

Utilizing available state cancer morbidity, mortality, and behavioral data, the project was able to identify the geographical areas in greatest need for intervention. The data also indicated a need for physical activity, nutrition and tobacco programming.

- Cancer survivor needs assessment helped the Nebraska Cancer Coalition and its partners understand cancer survivors wants and needs and informed best ways to deliver the interventions.
- Survey results cited the interventions needed to be offered as on-line classes or activities to reduce barriers of time, travel, and cost for rural cancer survivors to address their wellness concerns.

The state cancer coalition identified and engaged community partners in the geographical area who understood survivor needs, had prior established rapport, and provided services.

Built local capacity by engaging and collaborating with the only cancer center in this rural 7 county area. Jointly designed and delivered a needs assessment which yielded usable information for both the cancer center and cancer coalition. Enhanced the cancer center’s capacity by providing useful information for their forthcoming cancer accreditation and assisted the cancer coalition in addressing one of its state cancer plan priorities - survivorship.

Developed & Implemented Multi-component Evidence-Based Wellness Program

By offering nutrition, physical activity and tobacco cessation on-line, the interventions were intended to boost energy levels, rekindle hope and empower the survivor to take control and manage their own wellness behaviors.

Conducted Program Monitoring and Evaluation by collaborating with NACDD Evaluator in developing the project logic model, measurable survey questions and evaluation measures. This NACDD technical assistance further enhanced capacity for both the cancer center and the cancer coalition.

Plan for Sustainability

The coalition’s sustainability plan for cancer survivors included developing a “Kit in a Box” featuring the on-line wellness programs. “These programs could be easily implemented and inexpensively replicated by partners throughout the state with a small amount of training.”—Coalition Executive Director