



## STRIVE The Health Care Journey

### A Life Interrupted

Our mantra in life for Michael and I was to build a solid foundation of love, faith and humor to embrace life challenges. We were planning our fourth marriage as a couple and keeping ahead of the remarried statistics for couples. We realized early on we were not going to miss the marriage party fun, so we committed to renewing our vows every ten years. Michael relished saying he was getting married for the  $n^{\text{th}}$  time and after a slight pause, would add “to the same person.” Our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and vow renewal were around the corner when an unexpected guest showed up – cancer.

Suddenly, our life interrupted by cancer propelled our journey into high gear, but we resolved to strive forward in faith to light this blind path. As a couple, we climbed life’s mountains with relentless energy. A dynamic couple climbing the corporate ranks with two kids did not compare to the arduous health care journey we were about to take.

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To our chagrin, we believed our combined 40+ years of experience in corporate change management and logistics was a solid combination of skills to navigate the health care battlefield. Our probing questions, check points and copious documentation could not keep us in lock step with our care providers. We learned that medical hand-offs are the landmines that derailed our strategy for care and catapulted us on dangerous side roads.

### Our Landmines in Health Care Hand-offs

We found the health care industry to be a maze of medical services operating in silos that often left us exposed and waiting on side roads. Our oncologist, the general in our battle, was navigating us through the battlefield for Michael’s survival. At times, our oncologist required the assistance of other medical service captains to aid in the care of Michael’s cancer treatment, as shown in the diagram. The timing and tight execution of these hand-offs eventually determined which key landmines Michael would encounter.

Overwhelming tests and information overload is typical for any cancer battle. We quickly realized our own research, documentation, and organization of information were paramount to our decision making. Our corporate talents could not equip us to make critical and timely decisions due

to the loss of information from our hand-off gaps. This left Michael exposed and vulnerable in his cancer battle.

### Health Care Gaps Drives Our Crisis

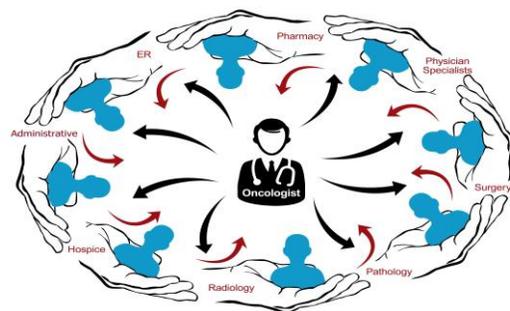
A holistic service approach promotes nurse navigators and case workers to assist patients to receive timely care in a health care system. Unfortunately, our journey crossed multiple health care systems which left us on side roads with no navigators to bridge the communication gaps between our oncologist and other medical service providers.

In any health care journey, the patient must have an advocate to navigate the landmines. I realized I was Michael’s caregiver, champion and advocate to navigate him off the side roads and back onto the main health care road for his survival. I connected the dots between his health care service providers so we all traveled on the same health care road.

### STRIVE for Quality Hand-offs

High-risk patients rely on quality hand-offs for their survival. We learned a stage IV cancer patient cannot tolerate a poor medical hand-off that shuts down their chemotherapy, the key lifeline in their cancer battle. Michael experienced a couple of “standard of care” hand-offs that impacted his chemotherapy and ultimately triggered the fatal landmine.

**STRIVE Michael** is our national hand-off framework to drive quality and affordable care for high-risk patients.



### STRIVE Commitment

The goal of our testimony is to drive positive change for medical hand-offs. Join me as I share how we navigated the health care system, the side roads and landmines to stay on course, which now drives our commitment for change.

To learn more about our efforts for health care change, please visit [StriveInc.org](http://StriveInc.org). To be part of our force for change, share your story with me at [kmcclelland@striveinc.org](mailto:kmcclelland@striveinc.org). We must unite to **STRIVE** for the best quality care for our loved ones.