

BACKGROUND

In 1973, USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center was designated by the National Cancer Institute as one of the nation's original eight comprehensive cancer centers, the first on the West Coast established to bring basic research together with clinical care to find a cure for cancer. USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital delivers care in 14 key areas of cancer treatment: breast cancer, cancerous brain tumors, gastrointestinal cancer, genetic counseling, gynecologic cancers, head and neck cancers, hematology, lung cancer, melanoma, neuro-oncology, radiation oncology, sarcoma, skin cancer and urologic oncology. The 60-bed Norris Comprehensive Cancer hospital is an integral part of the Keck Medicine of USC academic medical center and cancer care is delivered at many of the Health Systems 40+ ambulatory practice sites across Southern California.

THE CHALLENGE

USC Norris operates in an exceedingly competitive market. The Center is one of multiple nationally recognized cancer centers, including UCLA, Cedars Sinai and City of Hope. 2020 NRC data showed that awareness of Norris was significantly lower than these competitors. Historically, there had been no marketing to build awareness of the Norris Cancer brand, with marketing being limited to building volume for individual cancer service lines. Additionally, Consumers who were aware of Keck often did not know that Norris was a part of the Health System, due to its different name. To compete in this market, Norris needed to both reposition the brand and begin investing to raise awareness and build consideration.

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

To help understand how best to differentiate the Norris brand in this crowded market, in 2020 we enlisted NRC Health to conduct an online survey of consumers who have had personal cancer experience or have provided care for someone with cancer. Key findings included:

Preference

- Of those who have had experience with Norris, 51% preferred us. However, Norris was the preferred provider for only 4% of those who did not have experience with us.
- 86% of those who have had experience with Norris believed that our services were above average or excellent versus 53% for those who had not had experience with Norris.

Drivers

- Best doctors, specialists in cancer care and positive outcomes were the top 3 reasons for selecting a health system, followed by previous experience with the provider and access to a multi-disciplinary care team.
- All our competitors ranked similarly on having great doctors and great outcomes. Those who preferred Norris ranked us higher on access to multidisciplinary teams.

THE STRATEGY

To build preference for Norris we needed consumers to experience our care. If we didn’t increase our awareness, prospective patients would go to the competition. Drivers of preference – great doctors, outcomes and expertise in cancer care were all table stakes. We believed that our opportunity for differentiation was our ability to deliver high quality multidisciplinary care. Our patients believed that access to multidisciplinary care teams was important. And they told us that we were better than the competition in this area. Our guiding principles were, I expect you to have great doctors and outcomes, now...show me how my experience will be different with you and keep me in the center of my care. Empower and engage me respectfully. Put me first.

The new positioning was: *Because our best-in-class cancer specialists work together as a multi-disciplinary care team you get the care experience you want.*

- **Our multidisciplinary team** offers streamlined, patient-focused care that results in a better experience and better outcomes.
- **Our collaborative approach** helps us translate scientific discoveries into cutting-edge clinical trials and innovative therapies to meet your needs in the areas of prevention, detection and treatment.

Armed with audience insights and a clear strategy, we went to our executives to request funding for a full funnel Norris Comprehensive Cancer marketing plan. Beyond robust digital advertising, the launch plan included social media, media and public relations, website optimization, physician relations marketing and internal audience communications.

RESULTS

By May 2023, we had received the budget to significantly increase support for Norris Cancer Center marketing. We launched the first-ever Norris awareness campaign across LA and Orange County. We began running the first-ever LA-wide campaign to build awareness of our multiple cancer ambulatory clinics. And we ran volume building campaigns to support breast, lung and colorectal cancer across LA and Orange County. We optimized our cancer web experience to provide multiple journeys for prospective patients who were at different stages of their care discovery journey – from researching to making an appointment.

July - September 2023 performance data showed significant increases in both engagement and conversion (appointments made), compared to the Norris awareness and volume benchmark rates.

Service Line	Year-Over-Year Performance*
Brain Tumor (cancer & non)	+2100%
Lung Cancer	+794%
Breast Cancer	+752%

*FY2022 and FY2023 Paid digital appointment requests