

# GEORGIA'S CANCER SURVIVORSHIP NEEDS SURVEY

The Georgia Cancer Control Consortium's Survivorship Working Group conducted an assessment in 2014 to understand the physical, psychological, practical, and spiritual needs of Georgia's 410,740 adult cancer survivors. Of the estimated 900 respondents (729 complete) from Commission on Cancer-accredited hospitals, survivors were primarily female, married, white and within 5 years of treatment.

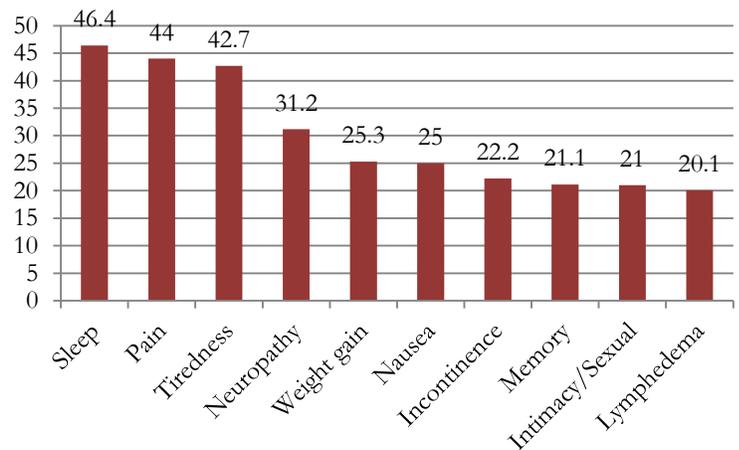
Those surveyed included survivors of breast (55.4%), blood (12.6%), prostate (9.4%) and skin cancer (7.5%). They were diagnosed on average at 53-years-old. Treatments received were primarily surgery (73.1%), radiation (60.4%), and chemotherapy (60.1%). Most were less than 1 year (36.3%) or between 1-5 years (44.6%) post-treatment.

The results showed their perceptions of **unmet needs** and **unseen challenges**.

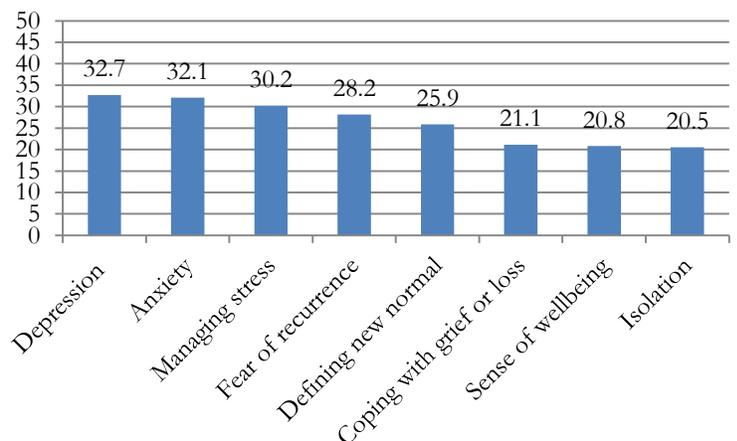
**PHYSICAL:** More than 25% of survivors reported more physical health needs, and greater proportions reported lack of support in dealing with them. The highest was sleep issues (46.4%) followed by pain, tiredness, tingling, weight gain, and nausea. Many **did not get help** for fertility (60%), body image (51.5%), intimacy (47%), memory (45%), and weight gain issues (39.5%). Most reported other comorbid conditions, with hypertension, high cholesterol, joint problems, and gastrointestinal problems being greater in frequency.

**EMOTIONAL:** A higher proportion reported needs related to depression (32.7%), anxiety (32.1%), stress (30.2%), and fear of recurrence (28.2%). Almost 92% had visited a doctor in the last year, but greater proportions of them **reported no assistance** in dealing with changing relationships, defining a new normal, feelings of isolation, or coping with grief/loss. The study findings support recommendations of the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer that would require cancer centers to implement distress-screening programs as a criterion for accreditation.

**% of Respondents Who Experienced Physical Needs**

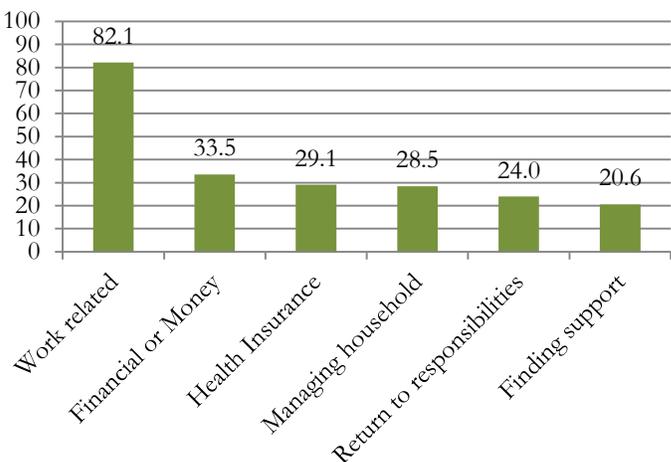


**% of Respondents Who Experienced Emotional Needs**



**PRACTICAL:** Related to practical needs, work-related issues had the highest prevalence (82.1%) followed by finances (33.5%), insurance (29.1%), and managing the household (28.5%). More than one-fourth of survivors reported that they **did not receive any help** in the areas of legal issues (38.8%), work-related issues (34.9%), or finances (27.1%).

**% of Respondents Who Experienced Practical Needs**



**SPIRITUAL:** A larger proportion **did not receive any help** in the areas of end of life thoughts (37.8%) and loss of faith (31.4%).

**TREATMENT SUMMARY & SURVIVORSHIP CARE PLANS:**

The study demonstrated that survivors **are not receiving** treatment summaries (48%) or survivorship care plans (37%) at optimal levels. The IOM posits that these tools have the potential to increase health and well being by empowering survivors about their diagnosis and treatment and educating them about required surveillance care and follow-up. Of those who received either, 98% reported that the information was helpful.

The results suggest further that **multi-disciplinary survivorship care** would better meet the emotional and mental health needs of survivors, and improve the coordination of care among oncologists, primary care providers, and other specialists, such as mental health professionals

*The Assessment of Physical Distress, Unmet Needs and Receipt of Care Plans of Cancer Survivors in Georgia was conducted in 2014.*

The **Cancer Survivorship Connection** was launched in July 2014 after Georgia CORE received a gift from a private donor to enhance the state’s online cancer information center – [GeorgiaCancerInfo.org](http://GeorgiaCancerInfo.org). It added survivorship information, tools and resources for cancer survivors, caregivers and healthcare professionals. ([www.georgiacancerinfo.org/survivorship/](http://www.georgiacancerinfo.org/survivorship/))



Georgia CORE presented a one-day statewide conference on **November 3, 2016** at the **Carter Center** in Atlanta, entitled **Cancer Survivorship: Up Close & Personal** designed to educate Georgia’s cancer center directors, healthcare professionals, cancer patient navigators, and primary care physicians about the unmet needs and unseen challenges cancer survivors face once their treatment has ended.