

Public Reporting of Outcomes Commission on Cancer Standard 1.12

2017: Quality Improvement Measures

In response to our Patient Advisory Council needs assessment, program support for children impacted by a cancer diagnosis of an adult in their lives has been initiated.

CLIMB program returns to central Wisconsin to help children affected by cancer

A program designed to help kids ages 5-12 find the courage to deal with cancer in their families has returned at Marshfield Center and aims to help children across central Wisconsin.

Children's Lives Include Moments of Bravery, also known as CLIMB®, is a six-week program that teaches children about cancer, the treatment process and how to deal with the stress and emotions associated with the disease.

The program, which hadn't been offered in central Wisconsin in several years recently completed its first class and a second session is now underway. Staff members have completed or are currently undergoing training to learn how to best help program participants.

"When a child finds out that their parent has cancer, the child can start to develop feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, incompetence and even depression," said Stacy Brise, Wisconsin Rapids Center Oncology nurse. "CLIMB helps them feel empowered and identify more readily with that parent and the family as a whole."

During the program, the children walk thru every step of the cancer process, from talking about symptoms, performing vital checks and how chemotherapy and radiation treatment are completed. A lot of time is spent answering questions, especially when the children become more comfortable and open up to CLIMB program coordinators after a few weeks.

"Some children had questions and they didn't know who to ask," said Kris Tarter, Oncology social worker, Marshfield Center. "With CLIMB, they have a comfortable and safe place to do this in a format where you can let them experience what the adult is experiencing. That knowledge is powerful for them. When they recognize their feelings it makes them feel more empowered to help."

CLIMB has been immensely popular in the West District where it's held quarterly at Rice Lake and Eau Claire centers. More than 175 children have graduated from the 33 classes held in Eau Claire since the program began there in 2009.

CLIMB sessions were held in Marshfield on [July 27-August 31](#) and [October 26-November 30](#), 2017. Six children participated ages 5-13.

In 2016, the Eau Claire CLIMB program won the national Exemplary Program Award from The Children's Treehouse Foundation, the creator of the CLIMB program. Marcy Elwood, Oncology social worker, Eau Claire Cancer Center, and Nan Bethmann, Oncology nurse, Eau Claire Center, will be trained in 2018 as national CLIMB Trainers with the Children's Treehouse Foundation and will educate new CLIMB facilitators.

The Marshfield CLIMB program was recently featured in a WSAW Ch. 7 story.