



# Care for a Cancer Patient as a Project

## Managing Complex Task Interdependence in Cancer Care Delivery

*Julia Trosman / Christine Weldon, on behalf of the  
ECOG-ACRIN Writing Team*

# Learning Objectives

After reading and reviewing this material, the participant should be able to:

- Recognize the importance of Task Interdependence in cancer care delivery
- Identify key aspects of managing Task Interdependence for cancer patients
- Understand the potential for managing patient's care as a project

# Outline

- Task Interdependence: a key Teamwork principle
- Patient Case Study
  - Care breakdowns when Task Interdependence is not managed
- Addressing Task Interdependence with Project Management
  - Why Project Management
  - How it can help to address issues
- Our question to the audience

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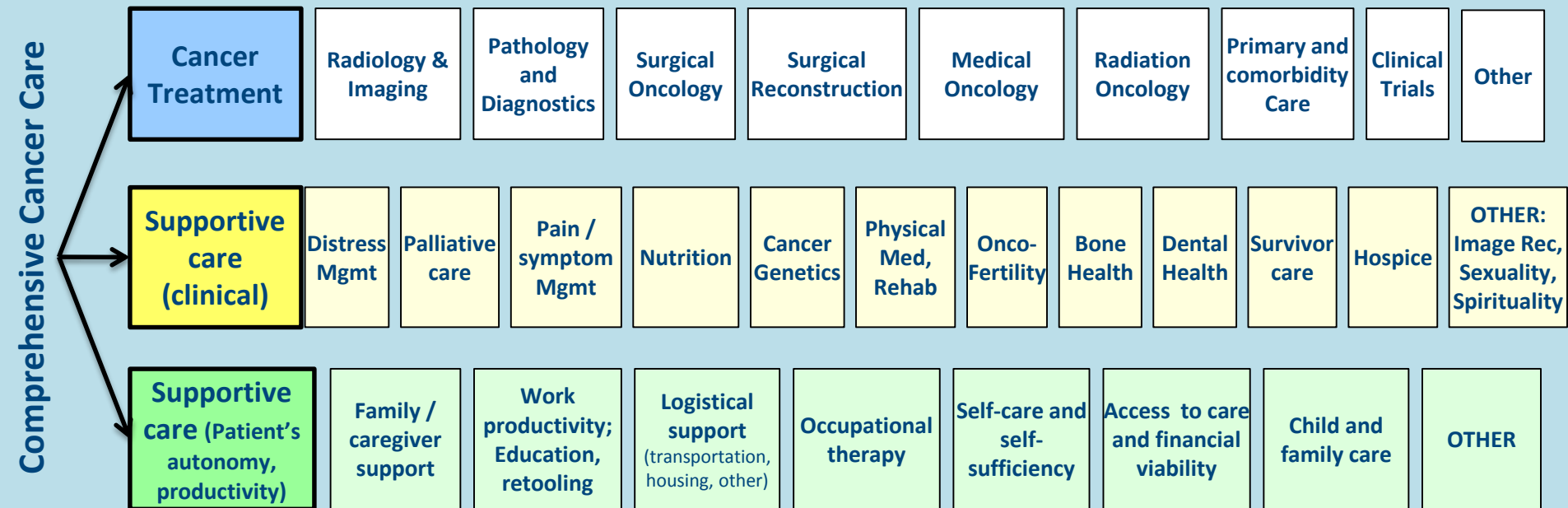
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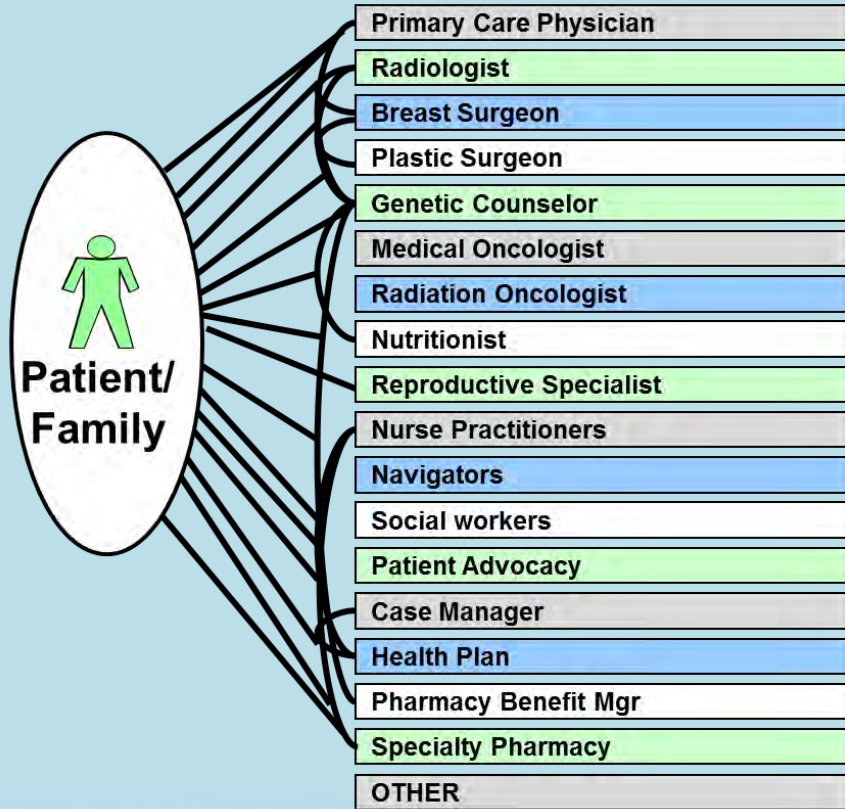
# Comprehensive Cancer Care

*The example of breast cancer*



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# Patient view of cancer care



**Different settings, organizations, localities**

**Complexity and fragmentation of care across domains, practices, institutions**

**Many key care events are interdependent, but relative timing / sequencing is not recognized or managed**

# Task Interdependence:

The degree to which the **systematic interaction** and **coordination** of team members are required to complete tasks

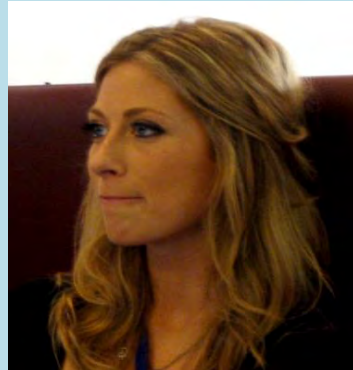
## Key aspects

- Timing and sequencing of interdependent tasks
- Formal responsibilities for interdependent tasks



# Case Study: Rebecca Smith

*“Rebecca Everywoman”*



*“Rebecca is a type of Everywoman, a composite representing the complex odyssey with which breast cancer patients find themselves confronted—one that is far too often filled with twists, turns, and multiple diverging roads where, as each path is chosen, there is no turning back. Each member of a cancer patient’s healthcare team plays a critical, interdependent role, as does the patient herself, in helping her navigate her path safely. All must be cognizant of the patient’s desired destination and together help her to avoid the potential irrevocable detours that could steer her far off course and to progressively navigate toward and ultimately reach the objectives she envisioned at the beginning of the long passage behind her.”*

***Debra Madden, NCI/ASCO Teams’ Member, Breast Cancer and Hodgkin’s Lymphoma Survivor, Cancer Research Advocate***



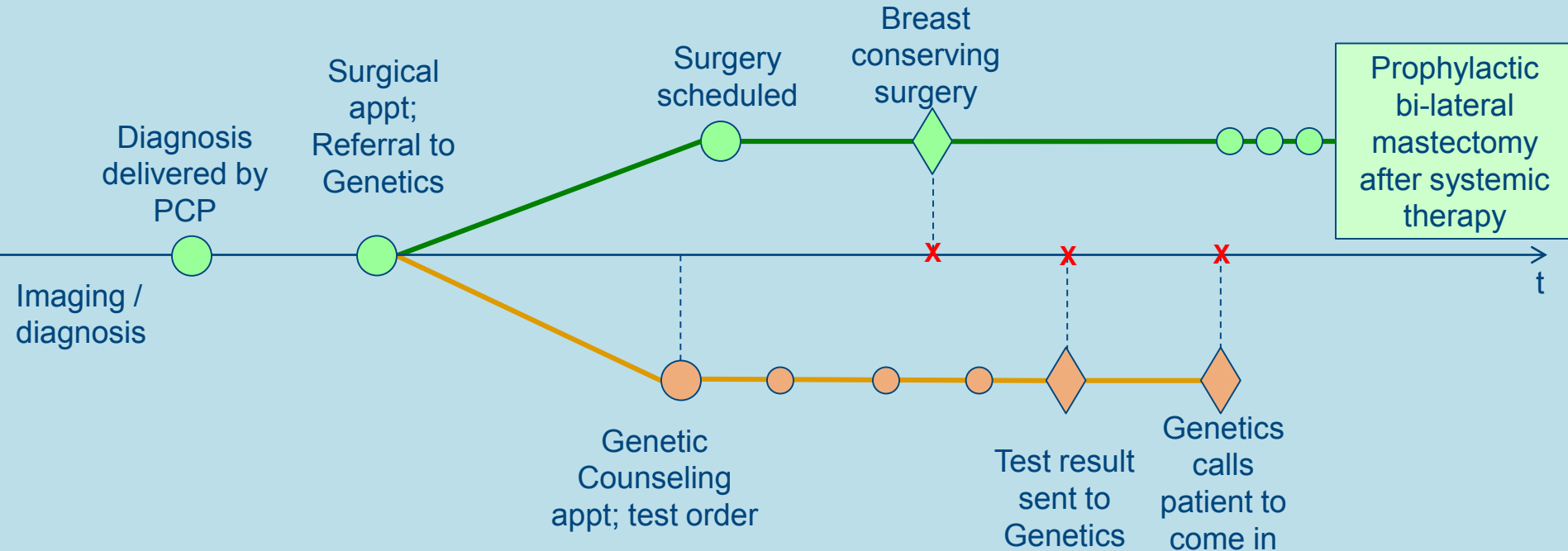
# Case Study: Rebecca Smith

- 32 yo, newly diagnosed with Stage II breast cancer
- Task Interdependence (**timing & sequencing** of care events; **clear responsibilities**) was not managed in:
  - Neoadjuvant therapy
  - Genetic testing
  - Fertility preservation
  - Dental care

**Result: care was delayed or entirely missed / forgone**

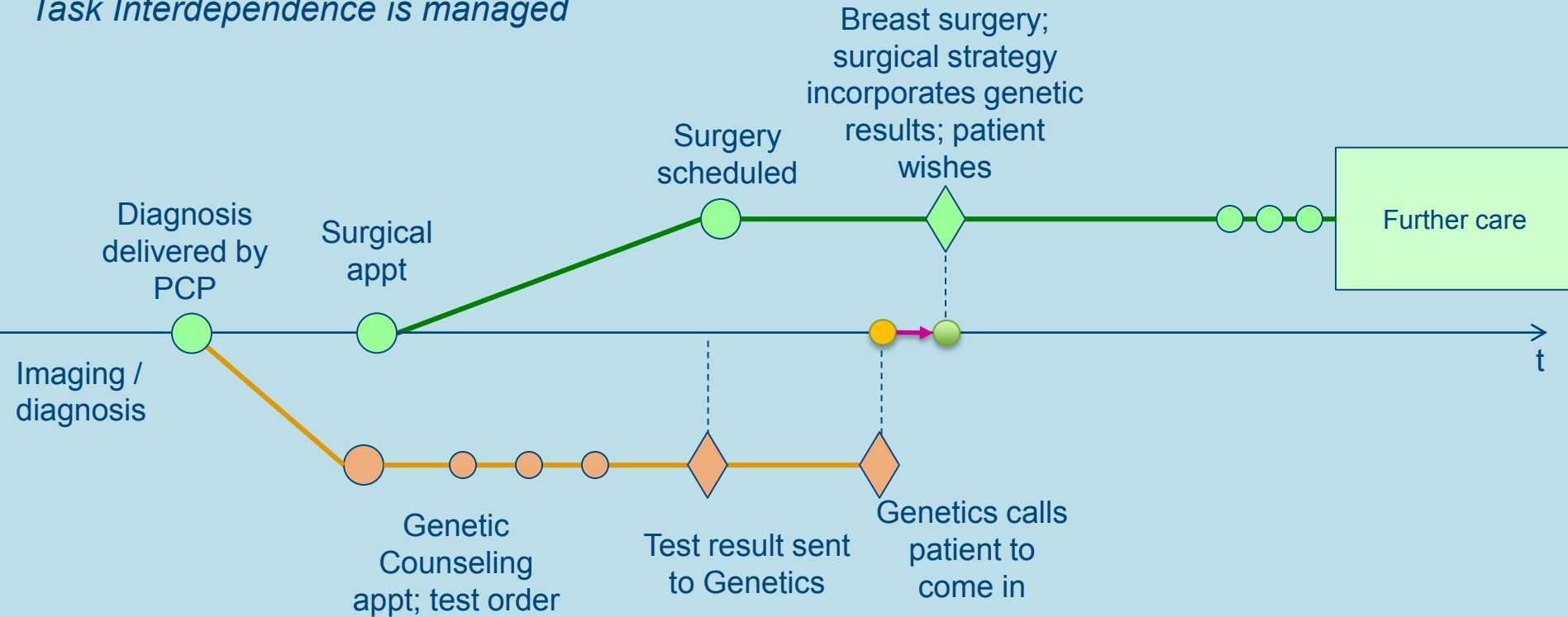
# Ex: Genetic testing prior to BC surgery

Task Interdependence is not managed



# Ex: Genetic testing prior to BC surgery

Task Interdependence is managed



# Using Project Management to Manage Cancer Care Task Interdependence

- Effective to manage complex projects with dynamic, multi-disciplinary teams and task interdependencies
- Inherently manages timing / sequencing, responsibilities for interdependent tasks
- Familiar to providers and many patients
  - Used in many industries, including healthcare (e.g., quality improvement projects)

***4R = Right Information, Right Care for the Right Patient at the Right Time***

# 4R: Care for cancer patient as a project

Critical Path Task	Responsibility	wk 1	wk 2	wk 3	wk 4	wk 5	wk 6	wk 7	wk 8	wk 9	wk 10	wk 11	wk 12	wk 13	wk 14
Initial Surgical Appt / LP / LCO Appt	LP, LCO, RS	◆													
Verify insurance and all providers	LCO, RS	◆													
Identify necessary charity care	PCP, LCO	■													
Conduct psychosocial assessment and provide initial care	PsO	■													
Medical Oncology Appt	RS, OO	◆													
Fertility consult	RS, FO		◆												
Fertility Preservation treatment	FO			■	■	■	■								
Dental Appt	DO			◆											
Dental care	RS, DO			■	■	■									
Neoadjuvant treatment	RS, OO						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Referral to genetic counseling	LP, LCO	◆													
Genetic Assessment & Test Order	RS, GC						■								
Prior authorization for genetic test	LCO							■							
Run genetic test	GL								■						
Genetic results back to Genetic Counseling, Surgeon	GL											◆			
Appt with Genetic Counseling to discuss results	RS, GC												◆		
Surgical appt - surgical decision (genetic results are available)	RS, SO													◆	
Surgery	RS, SO														◆

- Care project plan developed at diagnosis, managed as needed
- Based on templates for patient subgroups
- Timing, sequencing, dependencies of key care events
- Integrates care and support services for medically underserved
- Clear responsibilities, including patient / family
- Lead Physician: Care Team Lead, supported by Care Organizer

# Question for the audience

**How can we make the concept of care project plan simpler and more pragmatic for patients and clinicians?**