

Needs

Navigation

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is needs navigation?

National Patient Advocate Foundation uses *needs navigation* to describe the array of services that help people navigate our complex healthcare system to address their most pressing financial, social or other essential needs.

Who provides needs navigation services?

Needs navigation services can be provided by many different providers in many different healthcare settings. Navigators may be available in a clinical setting (e.g., outpatient offices, medical practices, cancer centers or even some hospitals) – these include **case managers**, **patient navigators**, **oncology nurse navigators**, **social workers**, and **board-certified patient advocates**. Other providers may work right in the community such as **community health workers**, or even in the financial planning space such as **financial counselors**. Navigation services are also provided through **charitable organizations** such as the navigation program offered by [Patient Advocate Foundation](#) for patients and families coping with complex chronic conditions.



What are examples of the ways needs navigation can help me or my family?

Needs navigation service providers can help with your:

- **Financial needs, including assistance with medical bills.** They can help dispute incorrect medical bills, negotiate payment plans or seek out charitable relief options. They can also direct you to financial assistance programs that help cover a variety of out-of-pocket costs related to your condition.
- **Household or other social needs.** They can identify safety net programs and community resources that help address any material hardships you might be experiencing with food, utilities, transportation or housing costs.
- **Health or disability insurance.** They can help enroll you in disability benefits or insurance plans, obtain prior authorization and optimize use of insurance to make sure you are getting your money's worth.

How can I get needs navigation for me or someone I know who needs this support?

Ask for it! It's important to raise any concerns you have around costs and access so that you get the help you need. Ask if navigation services are available at your doctor's office or in the hospital where you are getting your care. While your doctor's office or hospital may not yet have dedicated navigation support services available onsite to provide this type of assistance, they may know where to refer you or who to ask to get the answers and resources you need. Patient Advocate Foundation's website (patientadvocate.org) is a good place to start to get resources and/or contact information to speak with a trained navigator.



I want more people to know about needs navigation. What can I do?

[Sign up to be a NPAF volunteer on NPAF.org](#), join our [Health Needs Navigation campaign](#) and share our needs navigation resources. Our campaign toolkit provides ways to help you tell your family, friends, neighbors, colleagues and others in your community about needs navigation and how it should be readily and reliably available to assist anyone who needs it in every type of care setting.

If your organization would like to partner with NPAF to advance needs navigation, contact Melissa.Williams@npaf.org.

