



## Advancing Collaboration with Family Reach

### Approach to Collaboration

Family Reach is a national nonprofit; we're focused on the issue of cancer-related financial toxicity, in other words, the financial devastation a cancer diagnosis brings to cancer patients and their families. We created LiFT, which stands for Eliminating Financial Toxicity, and entails a network for like-minded nonprofits in this space to come together so we can help more families and raise awareness together. We began by gathering data on the magnitude of the problem and measuring the efficacy of our interventions. By disseminating what we're learning, we can all speak with a louder, unified voice.

By sharing our online portal, we can deliver financial support to families within 24 to 48 hours. This portal took us several years to build, but now healthcare

providers and members of our LiFT Network have access allowing them to increase their efficiencies.

In turn, the patient's grant information goes through our portal, we're able to expand our patient database, and our center for research can collect more critical data.

Family Reach operates from a patient-centered perspective, prioritizing the financial needs of our patients is our goal. People want to solve problems and make a difference. The power of collaboration has been the impetus behind our success. When we started to look at the problem by understanding the patient's non-medical journey and incorporating collaboration and innovation, we were able to generate solutions.

## Application of the 9 Considerations for Collaboration

### Build Trust

Trust encompasses vulnerability, transparency, and honesty. A good partnership requires complementing each other's strengths and weaknesses. We know what our strengths and weaknesses are, and we value transparency when we share them.

### Have a Vision

In terms of vision, partnerships, and collaborations, housing is the most significant bill most nonprofits in our space pay for, so we're working on a new project to create a loan modification program. Family Reach is collaborating with Wells Fargo and Penny Mac to pilot a program wherein families who have a member in active cancer treatment don't have to pay their mortgage for a year. By extending the length of the loan, we will be able to save nonprofits millions a year and keep thousands of more families with cancer in their homes. All parties benefit from this partnership – the biggest winner being the patient.

### Seek to Assure the Success of Your Collaborators

To ensure the success of our collaborators, Family Reach identifies their challenges and seeks to help solve them. Pharmaceutical companies are our most prominent funders. Often accused of being a major contributor to cancer-related financial toxicity, we look to help tell the full story of a cancer patient's non-medical journey and in doing so with our pharma partners, we can show how they are helping us solve the issue.

Many nonprofits and members of our LiFT Network have shoestring budgets – they struggle to add positions and increase overhead. When nonprofits collaborate with us, we seek to help solve that problem by sharing our existing resources and programs. We give data to organizations, so they don't have to launch a center for research to acquire data. We offer our back-end database and gateway, so they don't

have to build their own. We offer our financial planning program and financial education, saving them the monumental task of raising enough money to add to their overhead without affecting their program ratios.

### Take Stock

When we first began experiencing success with our financial education and planning, we quickly realized we needed to share this information. Through LiFT, we're able to expand our reach and touch more patients. In addition to the LiFT Network, we partner with over 400 hospitals across the country, and together we share data, generate ideas, and talk about best practices through our forum.

### Start Small

Our first LiFT Network member initially used Family Reach to distribute \$25,000 in non-medical grants to families. We efficiently handled distribution of the full amount to families in need and were able to share an impact report, family stories, and the hospital social workers' input. After seeing how we administered and distributed the \$25,000, the member began to give 4 times that amount a year in grants to families. We started small and earned that trust.

Family Reach also discovered that starting small allowed us to learn how other nonprofits function. Since we've been around for 24 years, we believe we know how to handle things in the best and most efficient way. Starting small enables us to acknowledge and accommodate other means of functioning so we can learn from each other. We learned that some of our LiFT Network members prefer to fill out the long application for the patient rather than having the social worker in the hospital handle the process. As a result, we now offer the application on our gateway, so nonprofits who operate that way can do so.



## Fail Fast, and Build Rigorous Feedback Loops

Honesty and transparency are essential; we are not afraid to try, and we're not afraid to share our failures. We share our experiences with our LiFT Network members because we believe there can be more to learn from our failures, than our success.

When we first set out to launch the mortgage loan modification pilot it felt so 'simple' and obvious and we were optimistic that we would be successful right away. It has been a real struggle to understand the mortgage industry, all the players, rules and regulations and where to even begin. We've piloted the program with Wells Fargo with not one success story to report. But we did learn a lot! Now we are expanding the pilot and are seeing progress, but it's important to share that a good idea doesn't mean it will be simple to solve. We are learning many lessons the hard way and are happy to share what we're learning.

## Take a Portfolio Approach

Understanding problems from our different stakeholders' perspectives requires a portfolio of solutions we must try. At Family Reach, we begin by putting ourselves in the patient's shoes. We listen to their experiences so we can identify the issues. Bringing in the social workers, oncologists, and hospital administrators allow us to hear what it's like for the hospital to have patients who aren't able to

pay their medical bills or aren't making it to treatment at all.

## Consider Non-traditional Partners

Our approach is to examine the needs of our patients, and we let those needs determine what projects we take on. Many families need food because their money goes towards paying for their treatment or permanent housing. Many patients also need temporary housing when trying to access care out of state. Family Reach partners with Hilton, who gives us millions of points a year so patients can lodge patients and their families near treatment centers.

## Keep Your Donors Apprised of Your Collaborations

We've seen tremendous value in keeping our funders apprised of our progress. We like to think of them not so much as donors, but more as collaborators. When we speak to a donor or a collaborator, we share a real example of what we're able to accomplish together. Consistently communicating the impact of their investments is the key to maintaining our partnerships.

We're always seeking new solutions and strive to do so fearlessly. Our priority is to eradicate the financial crisis of cancer and to reach as many patients as we can. To do so, we need the right culture in our organization that would enable us to pursue multiple projects with various collaborators simultaneously.

## Future Collaborations

Family Reach would love to work with someone such as Oprah or Ellen. We need a person who can help us raise awareness about our broken healthcare system, shedding light on societal issues as well. The mortgage loan modification, the temporary housing, hunger – these are all part of the avalanche that a cancer diagnosis brings, yet it's not something people think about when they hear 'cancer'. We're looking for collaborators who can help spread this message.



Carla Tardif, CEO  
Family Reach

## About the Organization

Family Reach is a national 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to eradicating the financial barriers that accompany a cancer diagnosis, a widespread issue known as Cancer-Related Financial Toxicity (CRFT). We work with patients and healthcare professionals at more than 400 top-tier hospitals and cancer centers, striving to reach more families before they hit critical financial breaking points. Through our solutions-oriented Financial Treatment Program, nationwide events, strategic partnerships, and generous community support, we disrupt how cancer financially affects families.

**Disclaimer:** All participants were interviewed about past collaborations through the framework of the 9 Considerations for Collaboration. Naturally in some organizations, not every one of the considerations are applicable to their circumstances.