

Improving the Inpatient/Home-Based Communication in a Palliative Care Continuum Through Use of a Smart Phrase

Stephanie Downs CRNP, MSN, Imran Shariff MD, Kimberly Spering CRNP, Jennifer Cooper RN, BSN, Kathryn Zaffiri, MPH

Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Background

Many hospitals offer inpatient palliative consultations, outpatient/clinic consultations, and home-based palliative care. Few studies have evaluated collaboration between these different teams. Poor communication between inpatient and outpatient teams may negatively impact patient care.

Objective

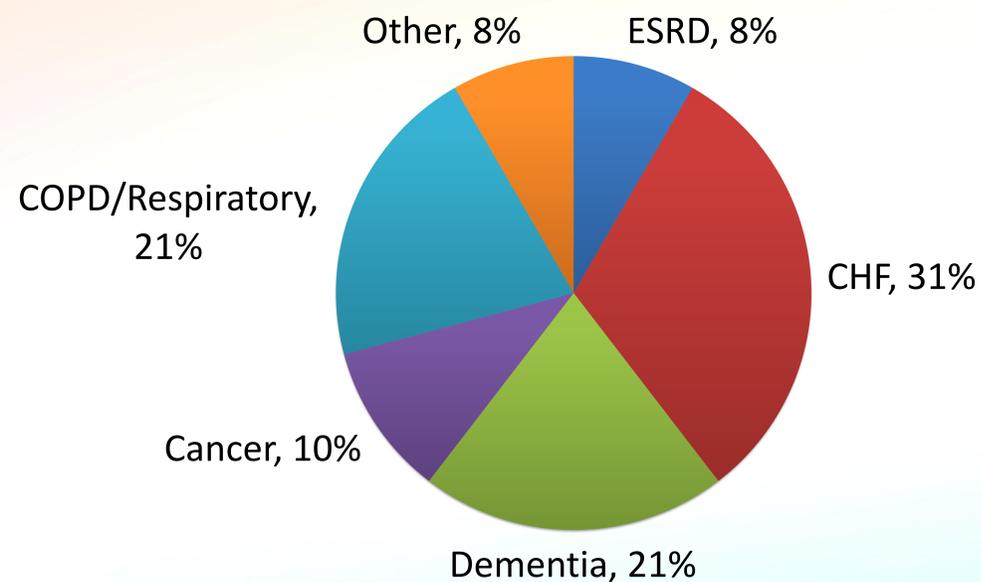
The aim of this initiative is to increase communication between inpatient and home-based palliative care providers to assist in identifying potential barriers to patient care, improve patient outcomes, and provide continuity of care in both the hospital and home settings.

Methods

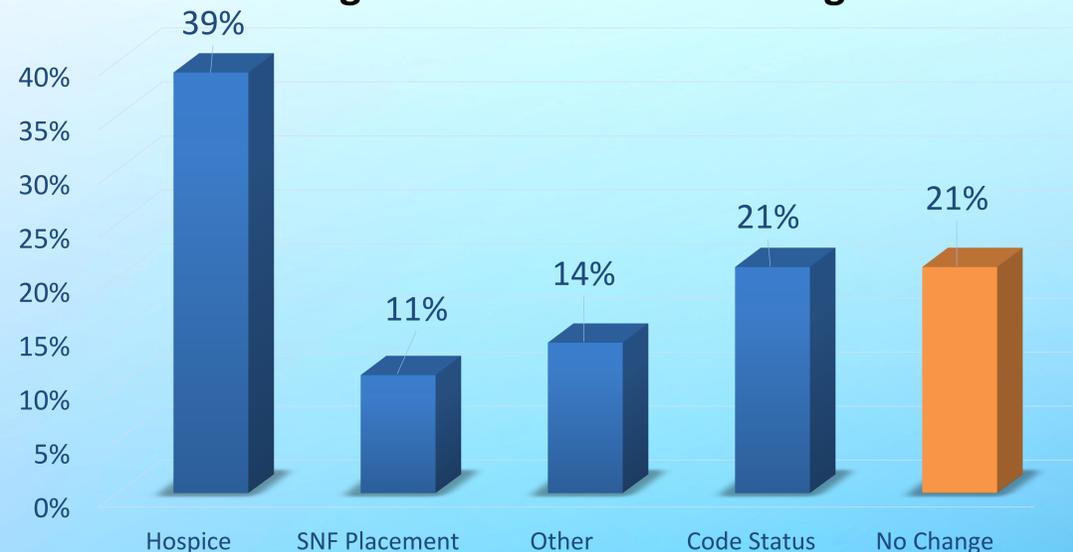
- Creation of a SmartPhrase in the electronic medical record (EMR) to provide the following:
 - Designated place to document discussions on changes in goals of care, disposition, or code status
 - Improved communication, understanding potential barriers with patients and families.
 - Assistance for the entire team with providing patient and family support in the hospital and home settings.

Results

Home-Based Primary Diagnoses Admitted Between Sept 2021 to Mar 2022



Inpatient and Outpatient Palliative Care Patient Changes with SmartPhrase Usage



Results

Palliative care involvement led to a change in care in 85% of patients. Time to inpatient consult decreased from 4.7 days to 3.4 days.

A survey was used to gather feedback from inpatient and home-based colleagues who used the smart phrase (N=12).

- 83.3% reported the SmartPhrase was valuable to patient care.
- 91.7% reported the SmartPhrase improved patient and/or family interactions.
- 100% reported project helped to create a better sense of team involvement when taking care of patients.

Conclusion

This project offered the opportunity to explore potential barriers to patient care and team communication. It confirmed the importance of collaboration between a patient's care team. All that is needed to make an impact was a simple and effective tool that utilized existing technology in the EMR.

Clinical implications

This intervention can be modified & applied to multiple sub-specialties and general practitioners, leading to improved continuity of care & improved patient outcomes.