BACKGROUND

- Concerns about palliative care and end-of-life education and training for nurses and social workers have been raised in literature for decades.
- Nurses and social workers provide front line care for seriously ill hospitalized patients, and are well-positioned to provide expert palliative care services in their field.
- Yet, many barriers exist for nurses and social workers to take advantage of outside palliative care learning opportunities such as funds to pay for training fees or limited time available to be away from work.
- New York Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH) nursing and social work staff had continuously and enthusiastically expressed a need for and interest in palliative care education.
- Despite a strong interest in and commitment to interdisciplinary palliative care education by the Palliative Care Consult Service (PCCS), no formal curriculum for palliative care training of nurses and social workers existed.
- Escalating number of palliative care consults for our Palliative Care Consult Service (PCCS) made it clear that all disciplines needed to be better educated in providing palliative care on their own when possible.
- Our on-the-job training model grew out of a response to these barriers and deficits in palliative care training for nurses and social workers as well as a growing interest and need for palliative care education.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote the practice and principles of palliative care throughout our institution by developing and supporting palliative care champions in nursing and social work.
- To develop a sustainable model for on-the-job continuing education in palliative care for nurses and social workers.
- To coordinate and facilitate these palliative care champions in their efforts to train new champions each year for sustainability.
- To utilize an objective pre- and post-program questionnaire to measure quantifiable improvement in fund of knowledge.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Initial primary recipients of this training program were 10 social workers and 15 nurses representing units across the hospital.
- The Palliative Care Educational Coordinators (PCEC) for the social work champions developed a hospital-specific palliative care curriculum based upon a needs assessment and other relevant palliative care resources.
- The nurse champion curriculum is based upon the ELNEC (End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium) core modules and each nurse champion was required to participate in a 2-day End of Life Nursing Education training offered by our institutions’ Department of Continuing Education for Nurses.

RESULTS

- The year-one outcomes for both programs demonstrate increased knowledge, improved skills, and increased confidence and professional development activity.
- Each champion program administered a discipline-specific 20 question pre- and post-program questionnaire. The nurse champion questionnaire had 3 response options including true, false and don’t know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview of test scores</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work champion pre-test score &gt;80%</td>
<td>25% (3/12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work champion post-test score &gt;80%</td>
<td>100% (10/10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse champion pre-test % correct responses</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse champion post-test % correct responses</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse champion pre-test “Don’t know” answers</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse champion post-test “Don’t know” answers</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

- We successfully completed our objective of training unit nurses and social workers to be palliative care champions.
- Our champions not only communicated a level of efficiency in providing basic level palliative care, but there was a quantifiable improvement in their knowledge base.
- The program has already completed year two; each of the new champions with mentoring support from their palliative care supervisors have trained an additional 20 social workers, 10 nurses and 7 nursing assistants, resulting in the beginning of self-sufficient education programs advancing palliative care in our institution.
- Some challenges included scheduling one-on-one trainings, seminar attendance, clinical supervision and culture change.
- Limitations include but are not limited to: small number of participants, attrition, selection bias.

FUTURE OBJECTIVES

- A nursing assistant champion program (already initiated), expansion of the programs to outpatient and pediatric staff, and continued utilization of previous champions as new mentors as a method of self-sustainability.