

Engaging Hospital Leadership and Clinicians for Widespread Palliative Care Education

Submitted by: Butler Memorial Hospital

Winner, 2019 Course Completions + 2019 CAPC Designations

Category: Hospital (150-299 beds)

Overview

Butler Memorial Hospital knows that palliative care education is important in order to better serve patients living with serious illness. They participated in the first John A. Hartford Tipping Point Challenge, engaging hospital leadership and all clinical staff at Butler. With the goal of completing as many Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) courses as possible, the palliative care team educated staff about the continuing education (CE) courses available with CAPC membership. It became a requirement for a specific CAPC course to be completed as part of Butler's clinical training, with the hope that clinicians across the hospital and health system—regardless of specialty—would continue to explore the curriculum and take additional courses.

Impact

Competing in the first Challenge addressed a two-part problem that needed to be solved. Besides needing clinicians across the organization to have a baseline knowledge of palliative care, their CAPC membership was underutilized—and they wanted to fix that. With so many educational modules and opportunities available, it became apparent that they needed more of the Butler clinical staff (outside of palliative care) to know about this resource. They knew it was the perfect opportunity when the Tipping Point Challenge was announced. After achieving leadership buy-in, the palliative care team started to spread the word throughout their health system, including to other palliative care clinicians and nonpalliative care staff.

Feasibility

The plan for encouraging staff to take as many CAPC courses and achieve as many designations as possible was led by the Butler palliative care team. Familiar with CAPC's offerings, the team was already in the perfect position to let their colleagues know about courses and the overall Challenge. They did this by first going to the administration to secure buy-in and support. They then went to the education department, which resulted in having CAPC courses included in the virtual training/"Net Learning" section of Butler's intranet. Since the "Communication Skills" unit was the most universal to all disciplines throughout the hospital, these courses were the first to be recommended. Out of the unit, the "Delivering Serious News" course was selected as a mandatory module for clinical staff, with the others being highly encouraged. Once staff started, they realized how much they learned and how easy the platform was to use—and many people went on to complete other modules.

(The mandatory course was implemented across the hospital for physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, social workers, case managers, respiratory therapists, and pharmacists.)

Aside from getting buy-in, advertising was necessary. The palliative care team did this by attending department meetings, physician leadership meetings, sending email blasts, and sharing through word of mouth. Butler incentivized staff to take more courses by hosting a competition between departments. Whichever department completed the most courses and earned the most designations by the end of 2019 earned a pizza party. Ultimately, this helped increase course utilization among staff, which helped them compete with other competing organizations. It also gave nonpalliative clinicians the skills that they had been seeking.

Scalability

As far as scalability goes, this initiative shows that Butler has done a lot of work to increase CAPC course utilization within all departments of their organization. And the feedback has been very positive from participating staff. When the CAPC team connected with them last, it was too early to see if clinical staff were using the skills they had learned. But the palliative care team had several physicians and nurses pull them aside in the hallway to tell them how much they had enjoyed the modules. At the time of this conversation, the palliative care team thought that nonpalliative care clinicians would be able to use these newly developed skills in their everyday practice. They also felt confident that course utilization would continue after the Challenge, given the positive responses, CEs, and comments about the ease of the modules.

Project Team

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About the Challenge

The John A. Hartford Foundation Tipping Point Challenge is a national competition to catalyze the spread of skills, ideas, and solutions that will improve health care delivery for all people living with a serious illness. It is sponsored by the [Center to Advance Palliative Care](#) and [The John A. Hartford Foundation](#).

For more information, visit tippingpointchallenge.capc.org.