



# Breakdowns in Communicating a Patient's Wishes: A Quality Improvement Project to Standardize Documentation and Communication of Patients' Goals of Care

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## Background

- Understanding a patient's goals of care (GOC) are key to providing quality care
  - Requires time, discussion, trust, and nuance to elicit
  - Documentation is not always clear
- Modern medicine is often fractured with many different teams caring for a patient
  - Handoffs are common and are known to be at risk for breakdowns in communication
- This project sought to better understand how goals of care are communicated by providers and to improve and standardize GOC documentation

## Methods

**Hypothesis:** increasing awareness of the Advance Care Planning (ACP) note type would improve GOC documentation.

**Intervention:** Residents were provided with information about this note type and a goal to use it for documenting GOC during quality improvement day, during educational conferences, and via email.

### Data Analysis:

#### Pre-Intervention Survey: August 2019

- Internal medicine residents (111 of 175 responded, 63%)
- qualitative and quantitative data about institutional goals of care practices

#### Post-Intervention Survey - June/July 2020

- Internal Medicine Residents (49 of the same 175 responded, 28%)
- Again collected qualitative and quantitative data surrounding institutional approaches to goals of care elucidation and documentation

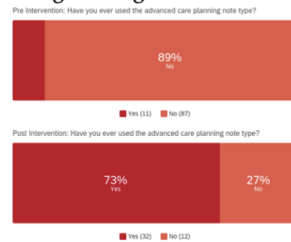
Pre- and post-intervention retrospective chart reviews of patients admitted to our medical intensive care unit who had a code status order other than "Full Code."

Variables collected:

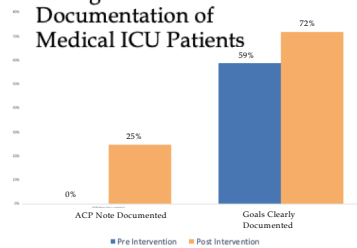
- Clear documentation of the patient's goals of care in the chart narrative (assessed by look through admission note, progress notes, and consult notes)
- Presence of an ACP note documenting GOC

## Quantitative Survey Results

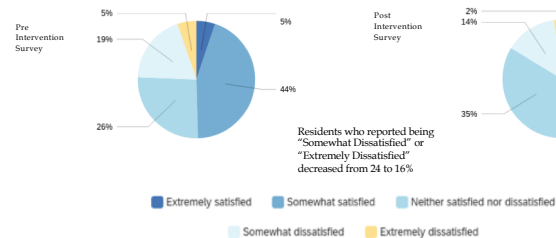
### Advanced Care Planning Note Usage Change



### Change in Documentation of Medical ICU Patients



## How satisfied are you with verbal and written communication regarding patients' goals of care?



## Qualitative Survey Results

### "Describe your current use of ACP notes"

- "...It is helpful because you can look through for a specific note type rather than digging through progress notes to look for documentation of these discussions."
- "LOVE IT!! I use it all the time!"
- "Useful for overnight cross cover and times when transferring care between teams, to help keep track of what has been done before."

## Discussion

### Limitations/Cofounding Issues

- COVID 19 Pandemic was in the middle of our survey
- National increased awareness of importance of goals of care conversations
- Timing in the academic year; early versus late
- Poor response rate in follow up (approximately 50% of initial survey)

### Conclusions

- Promoting use of a separate note type correlated with an increased frequency of that note types use, as well as clarity of goals of care documentation
- Uptake in ACP notes, from 0% to 25%, coincided with an improvement in goals of care clarity
- Residents had improved perception of communication regarding goals of care
- When an ACP note was completed, it provided a clear resource for any provider to assess in the chart

Further work is needed to increase use and to continue to assess the relevance to providers