

Creating Web Content to Demonstrate the Crucial Role Nurses Play in Palliative Care Communication in the ICU: A Partnership between IMPACT-ICU and VitalTalk

Investigators:

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Purpose: To create on-line content on the VitalTalk website (<http://vitaltalk.org/>) that includes the essential elements of our successful IMPACT-ICU (Integrating Palliative Care into the ICU) program, which trains and supports bedside nurses to lead palliative care communication for their patients. This proposal:

- Provides free, easily accessible, and high quality on-line content to provide ICU bedside nurses with tools to ascertain patient goals and preferences in a patient- and family-centered manner
- Builds an expanded care team by defining the roles and responsibilities of bedside nurses in palliative care communication and providing nurses with the tools to be active contributing members to these discussions

PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY: Research increasingly demonstrates the importance of integrating palliative care into intensive care units (ICUs), including improving patient and family support, symptom management, and communication to ensure that patients receive treatments that are consistent with their goals. Active involvement of bedside nurses is a key factor in the success and sustainability of ICU quality improvement initiatives, including palliative care integration. Despite the wide success of palliative nursing education programs, ICU nurses continue to report inadequate training in communication as a key barrier to their involvement in palliative care.

APPROACH: IMPACT-ICU (Integrating Multidisciplinary Palliative Care into the ICU) is a quality improvement program designed to integrate palliative care into the ICU by training and supporting bedside nurses. IMPACT-ICU was developed and implemented within the University of California Medical Centers, in response to requests from critical care nurses for training in communication and increased palliative care in the ICU. The program focuses on: 1) clarifying the crucial role that nurses' play in palliative care communication, 2) equipping nurses with communication skills needed to accomplish this role, 3) providing models through which specialty palliative care services can train and support bedside nurses in leading palliative care communication. Many hospitals have expressed desire to start the IMPACT-ICU program at their centers. A key barrier has been the faculty development needed to put on workshops. VitalTalk (<http://vitaltalk.org/>) is a nonprofit specializing in developing and facilitating advanced communication skills courses and faculty training courses to promote honest and compassionate communication in the setting of serious illness. VitalTalk investigators have led the field of palliative care communication, including defining best practices and developing innovative training methods. In-person communication training programs are offered, as well as a wealth of on-line content, including video demonstrations of key skills, and downloadable materials listing key communication processes and skills. To date, the focus of VitalTalk has been on physician communication. This project will expand the focus to nurses, and build the foundation for an expanded community of practice.