

Title: Impact of Inpatient Palliative Care

Organization: Mercy Medical Center-Sioux City

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Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- Present financial data needed to justify an inpatient Palliative Care Program.
- Utilize the patient/family satisfaction survey after Palliative Care to verify the success of patient/family satisfaction.
- Discuss how our model can be duplicated throughout Mercy Health Network or
- Describe Pros and Cons on why a Palliative Care Unit is needed.

Description:

The inpatient Palliative Care program is a very successful program improving how patients died and supporting their families through symptom management and emotional support. This session can demonstrate managing the end-of-life aspect of palliative care without requiring excessive resources, by utilizing “cost avoidance” as an effective financial strategy and also increasing family satisfaction.

Process:

Identified patient/family dissatisfaction with moving patients that were actively dying from ICU to a general care unit and then to a skilled care bed within a period of 5 days. There was no continuity of care, lack of emotional support to both the patient and family, and poor symptom management. A multidisciplinary team developed criteria for a Palliative Care unit. Outcomes would be: increased symptom management for the patient, increased family satisfaction, more emotional support for the patient and family, and a decrease in hospital cost through “cost avoidance” by not requiring excessive resources.

Measurement:

A satisfaction survey completed prior to start of our program, demonstrated poor symptom control and caregiver suffering. A follow up family satisfaction survey was developed to verify the success of our program. Of the surveys returned, 98% would recommend our program. A review of charges for 45 patients, demonstrated a savings of \$519,811. Palliative care lowers cost by reducing ICU length of stay and direct costs of lab, x-rays and pharmacy.

A Mercy Health Network workgroup has been created to develop common data indicators across the Network to demonstrate the impact of palliative care on quality, patient/family satisfaction and costs.