END OF LIFE CARE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

VISION STATEMENT: Discussing a cancer patient’s goals of care soon after diagnosis — where the provider clearly explains what is happening and the patient shares what matters most to him or her — provides both provider and patient with a foundation of communication, trust, and information sharing that can improve overall cancer care.

INTERVENTION WORKING GROUP

GOALS OF CARE DISCUSSION
Initial conversations within 6 weeks of diagnosis
Population: Stage IV cancer patients with solid tumors

PROVIDER/CLINIC TRAINING FOR:
Reimbursement via CPT codes
Promote awareness and provide training
Support IT functionality

PROVIDER TRAINING FOR:
How to have a Goals of Care discussion
Distribute conversation guides
Provide education to clinicians

EVALUATION
Track conversations via CPT codes and compare outcomes

Goals of Care Discussion
Focus on patient values, priorities, and treatment expectations:

Initial Conversation (Within 6 weeks of diagnosis)
- Clearly explain diagnosis/prognosis
- Ask patient...
  - What matters to you?
  - Confirm how the patient would like to communicate

Ongoing Conversations (Continuous)
- Use a conversation guide, as appropriate
- Ask patient...
  - What matters to you?
  - Discuss intent of treatment

Reimbursement
Increase CPT utilization
- Raise clinician awareness of CPT codes
- Training in CPT code use
- Engage administration and IT
- Develop business infrastructure

Provider Training
Provide clinicians with:
- Resource support and tools
- Training on having Goals of Care discussions
  - Include partners
  - Utilize established programs

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

Patient/provider survey on perceptions of Goals of Care discussion
Develop patient resource guide with stakeholder feedback
Expand population to all cancer patients, regardless of stage

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. Are there other efforts or pilot projects to increase Goals of Care discussions in our region?
2. What are some effective ways to implement trainings [both CPT usage and Goals of Care trainings]?
3. What is the most effective way to use EMR to encourage Goals of Care discussions?
4. Is 6 weeks after diagnosis an appropriate time frame for the initial Goals of Care discussion?

CONTINUED
INTERVENTION WORKING GROUP

END OF LIFE CARE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

WORKING GROUP PURPOSE
Design intervention protocol[s] to improve the quality of care for patients with cancer at the end of life.

KEY POINTS
- Reimbursement has historically been a barrier to having Goals of Care discussions
- Lack of provider training and resources is another barrier
- Recently many insurers, including Medicare, have begun reimbursing Goals of Care discussions
- The intervention needs to incorporate:
  - Training on the availability and use of CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) codes for advance care planning
  - Resources to engage in Goals of Care discussions

CONSENSUS
Encouraging Goals of Care discussions between Stage IV cancer patients and their providers, near diagnosis, will improve the quality of care for all patients throughout the treatment phase, as well as those near the end of life.

TOOLS REVIEWED
Ariadne Labs Serious Illness Conversation Guide
www.ariadnelabs.org/programs/serious-illness-care/resources/

Vital Talk: Addressing Goals of Care
www.vitaltalk.org/sites/default/files/quick-guides/REMAPforVitaltalkV1.0.pdf

The Conversation Project Starter Kit
www.theconversationproject.org/starter-kit/intro/

REFERENCES


