

Critical Care Program Engages Patients and their Families in Winnipeg, MB, Canada

Families are welcome in every Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) adult Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and their role at the patient's bedside is valued by members of the critical care team. Under both nursing and medical leadership (Program Director Jodi Walker-Tweed, Medical Director Dr. Bojan Paunovic, Outcomes Improvement Team (OIT) Co-Chairs Dr. Kendiss Olafson and Dr. Dave Easton, and Critical Care Quality Improvement Officer Basil Evan), a Quality Circle in each adult ICU is tasked with developing strategies that facilitate collaborative partnerships with patients and their families. Examples of strategies which support engagement include family presence during daily rounds discussions and encouraging families to participate in simple care activities such as moistening lips, brushing hair and applying lotion to the hands/feet of their loved ones. In addition, the OIT incorporates a family advisor into the development of their patient and family centered quality improvement initiatives.

The WRHA Critical Care Program performs annual family satisfaction surveys and uses these results to improve the experience of care for patients and their families. Recent initiatives include the provision/review of written information with every patient/family admitted to the adult ICU, and the implementation of "Cherry Blossom"; a grassroots project which began in the Victoria General Hospital's ICU.

The Cherry Blossom project focuses upon improving multidisciplinary communication and providing a respectful environment for families when end-of-life care has begun or a death has happened. On these occasions, the symbol of a Cherry Blossom is displayed to promote consideration for families and a quiet space in the unit. The symbol reminds everyone to speak softly and respectfully, and to recognize the presence of family

members who are experiencing the loss of a loved one. This ambitious project has received positive recognition from across the region and has since been adopted into every WRHA adult ICU and by other sites across the region.

Interdisciplinary collaboration, acknowledgement of patients/families as partners in care and the professional development of critical care team members are paramount to the program's success. To ensure a critical care culture which promotes continuous improvement, the regional OIT presents an annual Quality Improvement (QI) Symposium which highlights the achievements and best practices of the different Quality Circles from across the region.

For information about this year's QI Symposium which takes place on June 1, 2017 or to learn more about family engagement in the WRHA Critical Care Program,

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