Care Delivery System EP3

➢ Provide one example, with supporting evidence, of nurse(s) partnering with patient(s), families, or both to influence a change in the organization.

Nurses Partner with Family to Create a Bereavement Package

Background
WakeMed Health & Hospitals is the only trauma center for Wake County. All trauma victims in this area therefore arrive at the Raleigh Campus Emergency Department (ED) for treatment by the trauma team. Some trauma events result in a devastating loss for families, such as in September 2016 when a patient arrived after an accident that resulted in a loss of life. The family presented to the ED from out of town during shift change and found themselves in a confusing situation with a lack of communication and no direction for next steps. The clinical nurses in the ED, when the family arrived, were not the ones who had been present during the trauma efforts and were unable to answer many of the family’s questions. The family had to wait for a time experiencing emotional stress, confusion and personal grief of the loss of their loved one before someone was able to assist them with their questions.

Nurses Partnering with Families
The family reached out to Amy Horger, Patient Liaison, Office of Patient and Family Experience, in December 2016 to voice concerns regarding their experience. The family requested a meeting to further share the impact this experience had on them during such a difficult time of loss, and asked that the hospital consider developing bereavement information for families and a case study for the ED staff. Horger shared this feedback with Janet Huffman, BSN, RN-BC, Patient Liaison Specialist, Emergency Services. (Evidence EP3-1, Emergency Services Complaint Form)

Huffman initiated a partnership with the family by calling them on December 28, 2016 to further discuss their experience and schedule a meeting. The family expressed concerns regarding a lack of communication regarding the circumstances surrounding the death of their loved one, communication with a physician and how they were received on arrival to the trauma room. Huffman assured the family that she would plan a meeting with key stakeholders as requested so they could convey their concerns and obtain the information they needed.

Huffman scheduled a meeting with the family in January 2017, including herself; Kippy Speicher, BSN, RN, CPEN, Nurse Manager, Adult ED; Jessie O'Neal, Staff Chaplain; Liz Watson, Patient Financial Services; and Sanjay Premakumar, MD, MPH. The family expressed several complaints during the meeting, including their dissatisfaction with the process after the death of a loved one. Most importantly, they said that they left the hospital feeling unsure of next steps and completely overwhelmed. (Evidence EP3-2, January 4, 2017 Meeting Notes) Speicher asked the family for suggestions to foster a partnership with them to improve the experiences of others going forward. The family suggested developing a packet with the basic information that would be necessary or
helpful during a time of loss to prevent confusion and reduce emotional stress for other families when dealing with a death.

**Organizational Change**

After meeting with this family, Speicher pulled together a team of key stakeholders on January 31, 2017, including Huffman, O’Neal and Christie Hatch, MSN, RN, CEN, Supervisor/Educator ED. *(Evidence EP3-3, Bereavement Package Meeting Minutes)*

The information that would be included in the packet to provide family support was based on the feedback received in the meeting with the family. This partnership with the family resulted in the creation of a “Bereavement Package” that would be shared with families during a time of loss in the ED. The contents of the package were determined by the group on September 18, 2017.

With the help of Christopher Schmidt, Marketing and Communications, the team created a vinyl folder containing the following items:

- Going Through Bereavement
- Grief Support Group
- Grief – What to expect when you are grieving and ideas for coping
- Sympathy Card
- Informational card with contact information for key ED leaders and support personnel

The final item is a beautiful teardrop-shaped remembrance pin with a single red rose in the middle, signifying a love that never ends. The financial support for this pin was generously provided by the WakeMed Spiritual Care Department. *(Evidence EP3-4, Bereavement Package)*

**Implementation**

Once the Bereavement Package was complete, Speicher shared the final product with the ED staff on February 2, 2018. Education was provided to all ED staff members by email communication, using the “Adult Emergency Department Weekly Update” to describe the contents of the package and the process for giving it to families at a time of loss. *(Evidence EP3-5, Adult Emergency Department Weekly Update)* On April 18, 2018, Speicher took this a step further and shared the newly developed Bereavement Package with all EDs across the organization so bereavement would be handled with the same respect and dignity no matter where care was received.

Lastly, and perhaps the most important, Speicher called the family on June 22, 2018 to share with them that their request had been honored. During this phone call, the family expressed their gratitude for WakeMed having taken their suggestion seriously and requested to receive a bereavement package.