Using *Promotoras* to Increase Advance Directive Completion

**PURPOSE**
The purpose of this project was to increase advance directive (AD) completion among elderly Hispanics living in South Texas to try to improve end of life (EOL) care for patients in a palliative care program. Current practice in the palliative care program is for the palliative care provider to have advance care planning (ACP) discussions with all patients. However, not all patients complete an AD at the initial visit.

**BACKGROUND**
ACP was a concept that was introduced in the United States in the late 1960s as a legal method to direct the use of life-prolonging medical treatments, and these legal documents, known as Ads, allow individuals to be specific about their treatment choices in case of future incapability. Palliative care has been identified as the perfect setting to have EOL discussions and implement ACP.

ACP allows individuals to direct their care when they are not capable of making their decisions and prevents having to burden loved ones with acting as surrogate decision-makers. There are perceived benefits to ACP such as fulfilling the patient’s wishes and managing affairs while the patient is still capable. However, there are barriers to ACP such as struggling to think about dying and seeing the process as insignificant.

**METHODOLOGY**
The project included teaching a *promotora* how to have ACP discussions with elderly Hispanics using a culturally sensitive approach. The *promotora* was taught using lectures, vignettes, role-playing, shadowing a nurse practitioner, and direct observation. Once the *promotora* completed the training, she met with patients and families in their homes to have ACP discussions and assisted patients in completing AD.

**RESULTS**
One *promotora* engaged 100% of the patients in ACP. The *promotora* met with 32 patients, and approximately 87.5% completed an AD an increase from less than 50% before the QIP. All the patients were satisfied with the *promotora’s* visit.

**IMPLICATIONS**
With the projected growth of the Hispanic population, it is important for healthcare providers to have EOL conversations with Mexican-American patients. Having culturally sensitive EOL discussions with Hispanics is crucial so that their wishes are made known to others, and increasing AD completion among Hispanics can also help improve EOL care for this population.

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