

A Telehealth Program for Advance Care Planning During COVID-19: Pilot Project Overview

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Problem:

During COVID-19, Advance Care Planning (ACP) and POLST completion gain urgency and importance;¹ *however...*

***The pandemic makes it more difficult** to support ACP, especially for residents of Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs), **given social distancing and facility lockdowns**;²

***Increased workload** in pandemic draws down capacity for ACP and POLST completion/review, among nursing and medical staff;

***Patient/family education** resources and staff are **unavailable** due to pandemic conditions;

*Pandemic-related **loss of clinical-educational placements delays** professional **development and training** of current and future clinicians, in patient education and support for ACP.

Our Pilot Project...

Matches up SNF residents/family with POLST educators, over Zoom:

***Zoom/iPad** connection **overcomes distance** of lockdowns, re-establishing visual face-to-face communication;

*Trained volunteer **POLST educators reinforce SNF staff capacity** to support ACP efforts;

***Residents/family** gain an opportunity to **discuss and learn** about treatment indications, benefits, and burdens, in the context of POLST form options;

*Online POLST conversations provide a **virtual clinical placement opportunity** for graduate-level nursing students to observe and participate in ACP patient education; SDCCC now offers a monthly online orientation and training session open to students and SNF staff across disciplines.



References here!

Who we are:

*This project is a partnership between the San Diego Coalition for Compassionate Care (SDCCC) and the CSU Shiley Institute for Palliative Care at CSUSM.

*In April 2020, the Coalition for Compassionate Care of California (CCCC) invited these groups to partner on a pilot project, exploring the feasibility of telehealth communications for ACP/POLST conversations.

*The SDCCC is a nonprofit organization of healthcare and educational professionals, dedicated to the advancement of palliative care and ACP through professional and community education.

*The CSUSIPC at CSUSM is a teaching and research institute that promotes preparation of palliative care professionals and public awareness of palliative care benefits.

The Process:

*SNF staff identify residents who wish to complete, update, or learn more about POLST, and email a referral to project staff;

*Project staff schedules Zoom meetings between a CCCC-trained volunteer POLST educator and the SNF resident (and family, if desired);

*At the appointed time, SNF staff provide iPad/tablet access for resident, and family attend online from a separate location;

*During the Zoom meeting, POLST educator and resident/family discuss goals of care and treatment preferences, and complete new/updated POLST form;

*SNF staff obtains POLST signature from licensed provider, enters new/revised POLST into patient record, and uploads POLST to San Diego Health Connect electronic POLST registry.

*With resident consent, 1-3 students may also observe the meeting, if they have completed an associated training webinar conducted by SDCCC/Sharp Health;

*Students who are licensed clinicians may take leading roles in conversations, after a trial period of participant/observer activity.

Progress So Far:

*Our pilot project is now in progress at two San Diego County SNF's, and we have completed a growing number of POLST conversations. Both of our partner SNF's have joined the SD Health Connect E-POLST registry, as well.

*Thus far, results appear to be promising: The first ~12 conversations have all resulted in updated or newly-created POLST forms, and patients and family are reporting positive feedback when asked about the quality of the conversation and the education provided.

*Graduate nursing students have IRB approval to gather data and publish results regarding patient satisfaction and efficacy of POLST completion, as well as the project's educational effectiveness, from the student perspective.

*Currently we are seeking additional SNF partner facilities, given favorable outcomes of our first sample of online conversations.

*Please visit the San Diego Coalition for Compassionate Care website to contact us or to sign up for our POLST Training Webinar:

www.sandiegocccare.org

[This poster is solely the work of the author & does not represent CCCC or SDCCC.]