Clinicians and Patient Family Advisors Come Together to Improve Care in the ICU

The Problem
BIDMC has had an Intensive Care Unit Patient and Family Advisory Council (ICU PFAC) since 2008. The goal of this group is to have former ICU patients and family members inform quality improvement work in the ICU setting by sharing perspectives and experiences to improve patient care. Critical Care quality created a separate Critical Care Experience Taskforce (CCET). This group included representation from Critical Care clinical staff, volunteer services, pastoral care, social work and critical care quality, and was tasked with designing and carrying out quality improvement work related to the patient and family experience. While these groups maintained a constant feedback loop, they did much of their work separately and lacked the ability to have clinicians and patients and families work together to better care for ICU patients and their families.

Aim/Goal
To form a cohesive workgroup that included clinical staff as well as multiple ICU alumni patient and family advisors to collaboratively improve care in the ICU.

The Team
Joanna Anderson, RN   Janet Beswick, RN
Pam Browall, RN      Michael Cocchi, MD
Mark Courtney, NP    Juliann Corey, RN, MS
Paul Daigeneault, Patient Advisor Justin DiLibero, RN, CNS
Billy Duffey, Family Advisor Jane Foley, RN, MS
Jackie Giannakoulis, Family Advisor Stephanie Harriston Diggs
Susan Holland, RN    Susan Johnson, Patient Advisor
Suzanne Joyner, RN    Veronica Kelly, RN, BSN
Sue Kitchen, RN      Nicholas Kriketos
Lucie Lima, RN        Lynn Mackinson, RN, CNS
Jen Manzo, RN         Mary McDonough, LICSW
Dawn McDougall, NP    Wendy McHugh, RN, MS
Joyce Midttun, Family Advisor Caroline Moore, MPH
Sharon O'Donoghue, RN, CNS Kristin O'Reilly, RN, MPH
Dawn Piccolo, Family Advisor Ashleigh Robert, Patient Advisor
Kristin Russell RN   Liz Saffi, RN
Barbara Samoff Lee, LICSW Margie Serrano, RN, MS
Judy Sinclair, RN     Alison Small, RN
Pat Sorge, RN        Patricia Wengler
John Whillock, RN, NS Donna Williams, RN, CNS
Kathryn Zieja

The Interventions
- Presented the idea of combining these two groups to the ICU PFAC to ensure they were comfortable with a stronger clinician presence
- Presented the idea of combining the two groups to CCET to understand their readiness to discuss issues and create solutions by working directly with patients and families. Both groups agreed that this would be a worthwhile change and anticipated an even more productive outcome. The first joint meeting was held on October 8th, 2014.
- CCET members and ICU PFAC members and facilitators join together for the first hour. The second hour is reserved for ICU PFAC and facilitators to ensure PFAC members still have a safe space to debrief and bring up any other concerns in a smaller venue.

The Results/Progress to Date
From a patient advisor’s perspective: “It’s been wonderful getting to know the people who are working directly with patients and families to make a difference. I enjoy hearing their stories and contributing to the conversation. Improving the quality of care and patient dignity is a priority for everyone in the room.”
From an ICU Nurse Director perspective: “Joining the two groups was a natural progression and the thoughtful suggestions and genuine care and concern the group as a whole has on improving the patient-family experience here at BIDMC has led to many improvements in our clinical area and our approach to patient-family centered care.”

Lessons Learned
Real time brainstorming with both the clinical and patient/family advisors has led to creative solutions and a greater appreciation from both sides as to the challenges of the ICU experience. This discussion reduces the risk of the nuance of a feedback item being lost in translation between the two groups. It was important to maintain the second hour of the meeting for PFAC members and direct PFAC staff only. This has allowed us to maintain the trusting group dynamic between facilitators and PFAC members that was previously established.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next
- Continue meeting as a combined group
- Continue efforts to improve the patient and family experience in the ICU
- Consider combining other PFAC groups with clinical staff workgroups when goals for outputs overlap

For more information, contact:
Kristin O’Reilly, RN, MPH, Manager of Critical Care Quality
koreilly@bidmc.harvard.edu