

Patient and Family Advisors on Governing Bodies

The Problem

Critical Care at BIDMC had incorporated patient and family advisors into all areas of quality improvement except as participants in governing bodies. BIDMC as a whole and the Intensive Care Units in particular, have widely embraced patient engagement. Because of the successes of previous collaborations between staff and advisors it was decided that the Critical Care Executive Committee (CCEC) (the governing body for the ICU's) would benefit from a patient or family advisor.

Aim/Goal

To initiate advisor participation on the critical care governing body, the Critical Care Executive Committee (CCEC).

The Team

Critical Care Executive Committee
David Ekstrom, ICU Family Advisor
Michael Howell, MD MPH
Barbara Sarnoff Lee, LICSW
Kristin O'Reilly, RN MPH
Elana Premack Sandler, LICSW

The Interventions

- Offered the opportunity to participate in CCEC to all of our Patient and Family Advisors
- Chose an advisor to participate based on availability to attend and interest in the meeting
- Provided the chosen ICU PFAC member with background on the group and the purpose of the meetings.
- Designated a staff mentor to the advisor to answer any questions or clarify any topics of discussion before, during, or after CCEC meetings.

The Results/Progress to Date

- The advisor has attended and participated in monthly meetings for the last 24 months
- Advisor has offered eloquent, insightful commentary and feedback to the group
- Successful infusion of the patient and family perspective

Lessons Learned by our advisor, David:

"I have seen the serious level of commitment on the part of the CCEC leaders which translates to the members in support of Quality Improvement and Patient Centered Care. This quickly inspired me to want to devote study time once the agenda is known in preparation for the monthly meeting to understand and participate effectively."

"I am very impressed with the leaders' and members' candid and introspective views working towards Quality Improvement."-ICU PFAC Advisor

Lessons Learned by staff:

Despite some hesitation from staff that patients and families would struggle to understand or be able to offer feedback on topics discussed at governing body meetings, David has shown that there is a role for advisors in these meetings. The group has been able to maintain its candid discussion on difficult topics despite the participation of an advisor. Committee members are always eager to hear David's thoughts.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Continue to have an advisor participate on CCEC
- Encourage other areas of BIDMC to have an advisor participate in their governing body meetings
- Continue to provide support for advisors in the form of a staff mentor