Enhancing our Practice of Respect after Loss

Standardizing Communication of Autopsy Results to Families & Loved Ones

Our Challenge

BIDMC's current post-death process is prone to errors that cause harm to families and contribute to suboptimal workflows for BIDMC staff and health care professionals. Not surprisingly, because of this complexity, the process is unreliable, and not infrequently, these errors impact bereaved family members, and fail to meet our standards of respect and dignity. A Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA) revealed that initiating a process for communication of autopsy results was a high priority opportunity.

Our Goal

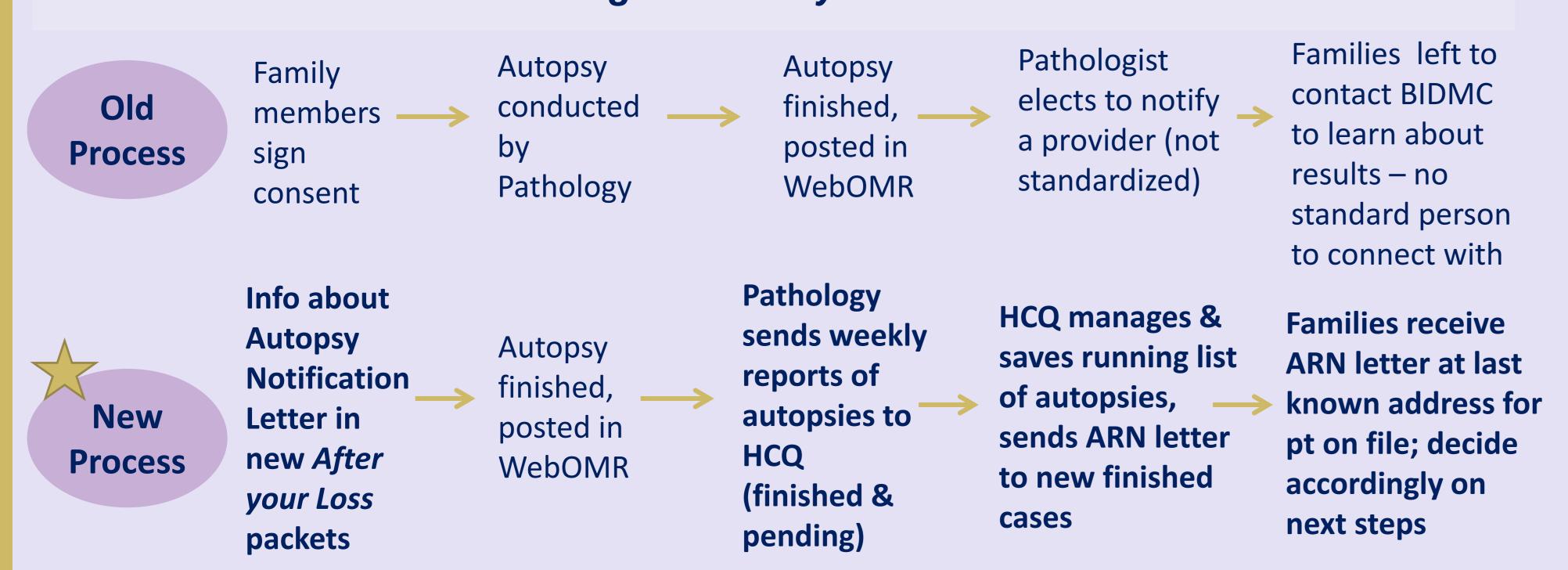
Initiate an Autopsy Results Management System that standardizes notification of autopsy results to family members once reports are finalized.

Our Team

- Andrea J. Branchaud, MPH | Healthcare Quality
 Debbie Ribaya | Pathology
- Patricia Folcarelli, RN, PhD | Healthcare Quality
 Lauge Sokol-Hessner, MD | Healthcare Quality
- Jonathan Hecht, MD | Pathology
- Patient Relations Department

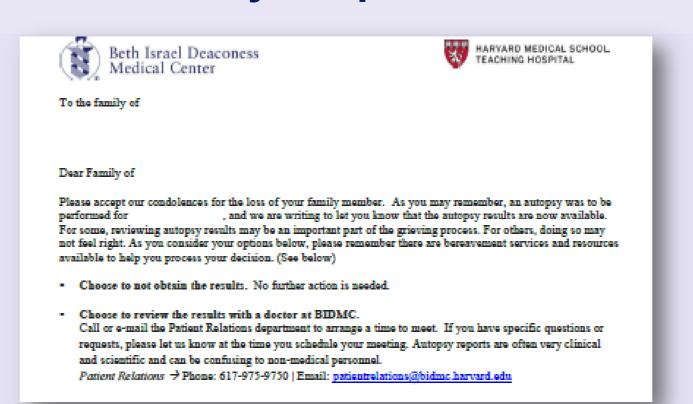
- - Julius Yang, MD, PhD | Healthcare Quality, Medicine
- Our Intervention

Enhancing the Quality of our Process



Our Intervention, cont'd

Letter to Family Member notifying results are ready, sent "to the family of" patient's name



Reinforces options for learning results (including to do nothing at all), includes contact information for grief support, resources available for various questions after autopsy

hoose to receive a copy of the formal autopsy report. inder Massachusetts law, only the Personal Representative (appointed by a Massachusetts Probate Court) has the legal authority to receive (upon request) a copy of the autopsy report. The Personal Representative must complete the BIDMC Authorization to Release Protected Health prmation form, which is included with this letter. Send both a copy of the document identifying the legal Personal Representative and the Authorization to Release Protected Health Information form completed by the Personal Representative to: BIDMC, Dedham Correspondence Center | Attention: Crosby Bennett, Manager | 330 Brookline Avenue | Boston, MA 02215. For questions about this form, please call Medical Records Department at 617 your own. You can seek to become the Personal Representative by completing the necessary paperwork at a estates/probate-options.html. It may be that you are eligible for Voluntary Administration, and that link is here: http://www.mass.gov/courts/selfhelp/wills-and-estates/voluntary.html. If you would like an attorney to help you and you do not already have one, the Boston Bar Association, Lawyer Referral Service can make a f you are interested in having help with your grief and loss, please call the Department of Social Work at BIDMC Our thoughts are with you and your family Patient Relations Department of Healthcare Quality 330 Bookline Avenue Phone: (617) 975-9750 OV-5 Fac (617) 975-9730

Progress and Learning

Project Start Date - all completions as of: 4/3/17			Data up to 2/5/18
Total # of Cases in Project Window to			
Date	85		
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	Notes
Adult Autopsies	71		
> Adult Autopsies - Pending	9	13%	
> Adult Autopsies - Completed	62	87%	
Adult Autopsies - Letters Sent	53	85%	
Letters Returned	7	13%	
Comments Received (Patient			Family members calling patient relations communicate they appreciated receiving a letter and found information helpful; PR coordinating
Relations, other)	4	8%	meetings and needed information about date letter sent
Adult Autopsies - Letters Not Sent	9	15%	
Reason 1	8	89%	Note in OMR that provider/pr already had conversation with family re: results.
Reason #2: No address on file	1		Transfer from Needham, no information in OMR.
IUFD/Neonate Autopsies	14		
> IUFD Autopsies - Pending	4	29%	
> IUFD Autopsies - Completed	10	71%	
IUFD Autopsies - Letters Sent	0		
IUFD Autopsies - Letters Not Sent	10	100%	Letters intentionally not sent until requested by ObGyn/NICU Department team members.

Next Steps

Continue sending letters; Review system for measuring impact; determine efficient way for Patient Relations & Care Providers to be aware if/when letters sent

For more information, contact Andrea Branchaud: abrancha@bidmc.harvard.edu