Communication Phrases for Limited English Proficient Patients

The Problem

Surgical Residents wanted a quick and accurate way to check in with their Limited English Proficient patients post surgery, during off hours. Even though there are interpreters available 24/7 either in person, or via phone, there was a desire to expedite a brief communication without the need to page. This was an opportunity for efficiency that would also assist in timeliness and equitability of patient care and decrease or eliminate delay

Aim/Goal

To create "flash cards"/communication phrases available on the portal in the top 9 languages, and provide another way for health care providers to check in with Limited English Proficient Patients for simple yes/no responses to assist healthcare providers to make basic clinical decisions or be concerned for a complication. Especially for unanticipated events, quick communications can help teams to stay on schedule.

The Team

- P Dr. Donald Moorman, Vice Chair and Associate Surgeon in Chief
- Yiming Ching, MD
- Shari Gold-Gomez, Interpreter Services
- Ediss Gandelman, Community Benefits
- Cindy Whitcome, Communications
- Jane Hayward, Media Services

The Interventions

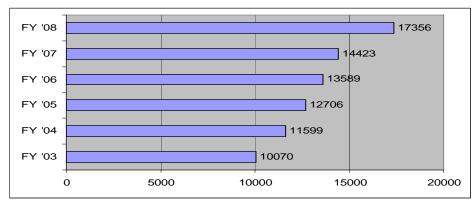
- Create the basic desired phrases in English to elicit only yes or no answers
- Insert a phrase to check for patient's literacy in their own language
- Legal review to convey that phrases would not be used to replace interpreters for more complex questions or conversations.
- Communications and Media Services collaboration in posting the phrases to the intranet and marketing/announcement efforts.

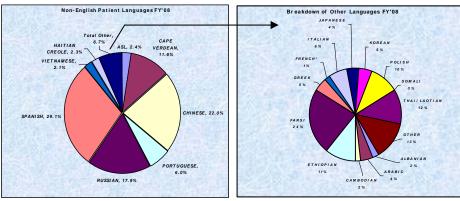
The Results/Progress to Date

Bedside communications sheets have been made available on the portal giving patient care providers general and quick information, but definitely does NOT replace communications provided by interpreters. The need for such tools increases as the limited English speaking inpatient population increases.



LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING INPATIENT DAYS FOR TOP 8 LANGUAGES at BIDMC





Lessons Learned

- For patients who are intubated or cannot respond verbally, our first phrase of "state your name" to check for literacy, could be adapted as "raise your arm" if you can read this statement.
- Include icons and visual symbols for illiterate patients

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next:

With the assistance of Information Systems, we will begin to track the number of hits to these tools to monitor usage.



