

Realizing Continuity of Care Through Oncology Navigation Nurses' Use of Electronic Documentation

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Abstract

Background: It is the role of oncology navigation nurses to link cancer patients and their families and caregivers to the appropriate resources to overcome barriers to healthcare (Oncology Nurses Society, 2017). Because providers in our setting found it difficult to locate documentation by navigation nurses, we formed a task force to evaluate options for improvement. Members included research nurses, medical records staff, informatics staff, and oncology staff from inpatient, outpatient, and breast health settings. During the course of a year the team performed real-time and retrospective workflow analyses, conducted team building exercises, developed a process improvement plan, developed documentation standards and templates, conducted a pilot, implemented revisions and then rolled out the new processes and materials house wide. **Aim:** The main focus of this project was to have the oncology navigators work collaboratively with other team members to create an electronic document that was detailed, met the ONS standards, and could easily be located in the electronic medical record (EMR) by all health care providers, with the goal of ensuring continuity of care. **Methods:** Real-time work flow analyses revealed that the oncology navigators were scattered throughout the hospital working in their own silos. There was no uniformity in how the navigation assessments were conducted. In addition, there was no standard on what information was gathered nor how it was documented. Moreover, the real-time work flow analyses showed a lack of team cohesiveness that needed to be addressed before defining the documentation needs. A retrospective chart analysis of the current electronic documentation was conducted to get a better understanding of the magnitude of the problem. Having come to understand the needs for improvement, the task force created documentation guidelines. These became the foundation for the development of a uniform Oncology Navigation Report that included all the ONS standards for navigation. **Results:** 1) Oncology Navigation Nurses are now a cohesive team who are still meeting once a week. They continue to work on oncology issues and discuss cases to ensure all resources available are being utilized to provide excellent care to cancer patients. 2) Physicians are able to locate the Oncology Navigation Report, allowing for continuity in care across disciplines. 3) The Oncology Navigation Report is a comprehensive document that follows ONS standards for Oncology Navigation. **Conclusion:** Collaboratively developed, standards-based electronic documentation by oncology nurse navigators has enhanced communications through all disciplines caring for the patient who has cancer. The patients are receiving the services they need to support them through a difficult diagnosis. The development of electronic documentation resulted in an oncology navigation team's becoming a cohesive group promoting continuity of care. **References:** Oncology Nursing Society, (2017). Oncology nursing society oncology nurse navigator core competencies. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.org> Kannampallil, T.G., Amraham, J., & Patel, V. L. (2016). "Methodological framework for evaluating clinical processes: A cognitive informatics perspective". *Journal of Biomedical Informatics*, 64, 342-351