Building an early palliative care pathway for advanced colorectal cancer patients in Alberta: identifying current state barriers and gaps to early palliative care

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BACKGROUND
PaCES was conceived to address the problem of late referrals to palliative care (PC) for advanced cancer patients in Alberta, Canada.

OBJECTIVES
• Use process improvement strategies to identify why complex care becomes fragmented.
• Engage stakeholders in the proposal of solutions to gaps and barriers identified.

METHODS
• Process mapping, affinity analysis, and fishbone analysis were used to understand the current state, identify gaps and barriers, and identify root causes.
• Stakeholders and front line workers (n=65, from 17 stakeholder groups) brainstormed solutions to the root causes.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS
• Process improvement strategies assisted in identifying why complex care becomes fragmented.
• The results are informing future state development and targets for improvement.
• By bringing individual teams together we created an opportunity for collaboration, increased stakeholder awareness and devised collaborative solutions.

FUTURE STEPS
• Ranking of actionable solutions by priority matrix based on value, complexity and number of people impacted.

Solutions underway include:
• Creation of transition letters for advanced cancer patients transitioning to community.
• Embedding the definition of palliative care into patient education materials.
• Creation of flags in Electronic Medical Record to highlight patients that may benefit from an earlier approach to palliative care.