

An Innovative Strategy to Improve the Quality of Care for Patients at End-of-Life

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Purpose

- To improve the quality of care for patients and families at end-of-life through the use of an innovative strategy of providing 100 bedside nurses with scholarships to complete the online End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) program.
- 99/100 registered nurses completed the online ELNEC program, with one nurse moving out-of-state. This \$10,000 investment, provided by the Palliative Care program, made it possible for the nurses to receive the ELNEC education.

Objectives

- Discuss a unique scholarship program that enabled 100 bedside nurses at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) to receive education on improving the quality of end-of-life care.
- Identify improved knowledge and attitudinal scores of nurses after completing the online ELNEC program.
- Summarize improved patient satisfaction metrics that were realized after nurses completed the online ELNEC program.

Process / Implementation

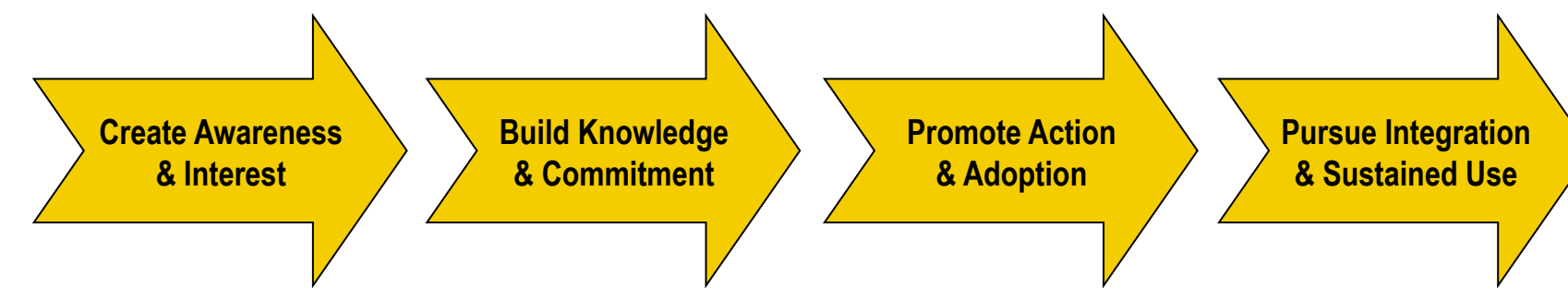
- The UIHC Palliative Care team recognized a deficit in knowledge and nursing skill in providing quality end-of-life care and committed to support improvements.
- In April 2013, the Palliative Care program, under the direction of Ann Broderick, MD, provided scholarships for 100 bedside nurses to complete the online ELNEC program over the next year.
- ELNEC is a nationally recognized program initiated to improve end-of-life care across the country.
- ENLEC content is divided into 8 modules, including nursing care at the end-of-life, pain management, symptom management, ethical/legal issues, cultural considerations in end-of-life care, communication, loss/grief/bereavement and preparation for and care at the time of death.
- Nurses are expected to pass all eight modules in order to successfully complete the ELNEC curriculum.

Relevance / Significance

- End-of-life care in the United States is often fragmented and inconsistent, leading to poor quality of care provided to patients and families.
- Specific end-of-life curricula are not consistently used to train professional nurses and educational opportunities related to improving end-of-life care are limited.
- UIHC was interested in using a novel approach in providing education to nurses caring for patients at end-of-life, so scholarships for the online ELNEC program were offered.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation Strategies for Evidence-Based Practice



	Create Awareness & Interest	Build Knowledge & Commitment	Promote Action & Adoption	Pursue Integration & Sustained Use
Connecting with Clinicians, Organizational Leaders and Key Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight advantages* or anticipated impact* Continuing education programs* Staff meetings Unit newsletters / Unit councils Unit in-services Distribute key evidence Posters and postings/ flyers Announcements & broadcasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education (computer-based)* Link practice change & power holder/stakeholder priorities* Unit based champions Educational outreach* Disseminate credible evidence with clear implications for practice* Make impact observable* Clinician input* Match practices with resources & equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational outreach* Reminders of practice prompts* Resource materials available Share metrics* Multidisciplinary discussions Report progress & updates Unit champions*, core group*, group leader Role model* Provide recognition at the point of care* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate progress* Recognition* Personalize the messages to staff – stress the importance of quality end-of-life care Encourage peer influence Develop end-of-life Special Interest Group (SIG) Consider forming end-of-life Journal Club Plan annual end-of-life continuing education program
Building Organizational System Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior executive support Publicize the program in the Nursing blog and other venues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage teamwork* Discuss at Department of Nursing Staff Education Committee meeting Inform organizational leaders* Report within organizational infrastructure* Define action plan* Report to senior leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit key indicators* Non-punitive discussion of results* Rounding by unit & organizational leadership* Report into quality improvement program* Report to senior leaders Define action plan* Link to patient/family needs & organizational priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review pre and post metrics Report to senior leaders and the Palliative Care team* Project responsibility to nurses and units that participated in program Strategic plan to train additional nurses* Trend results of patient satisfaction* Present in educational programs

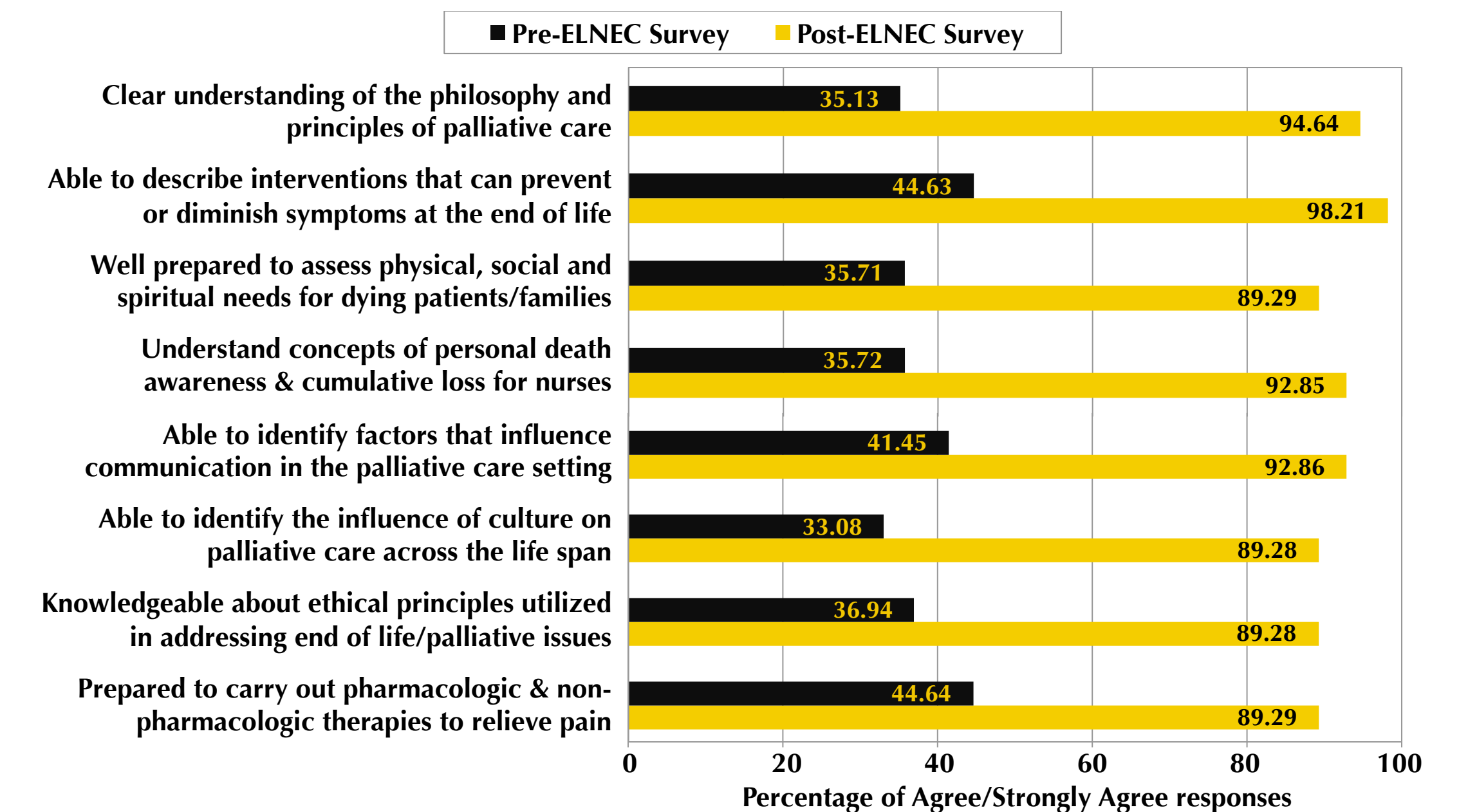
* = Implementation strategy is supported by at least some empirical evidence in healthcare

Cullen, L. & Adams, S. (2012). Planning for implementation of evidence-based practice. *Journal of Nursing Administration*. 42(4), 222-230. DO NOT REPRODUCE WITHOUT PERMISSION.

Evaluation

- A pre- and post-knowledge based test and an attitudinal survey were required to be completed by all nurses participating in the ELNEC scholarship program.
- After completion of the ELNEC course, a 15.6% increase in the class score average was noted on the knowledge based post-test when compared to the pre-test.
- The attitudinal survey results are listed in the graph below. The scores were significantly higher on the post-survey, indicating that the nurses felt better prepared to provide quality end-of-life care after completing the ELNEC program.

ELNEC AT UIHC (April 2013 – April 2014): Nursing Outcomes



Patient Results

- Since the initiation of the online ELNEC training program, the adult HCAHPS patient satisfaction aggregate scores for the question, "Was your pain well controlled?" have shown a 7.9% increase in the percentage of "Always" scores, raising the UIHC ranking for this question to 71st percentile nationally.
- Improvements have been noted in other areas of patient satisfaction over the past year.

Conclusions / Implications for Nursing Practice

- The knowledge and skill that UIHC nurses gained from completing the online ELNEC program has contributed to improvements in care for patients and families at end-of-life.
- The expectation of this unique and innovative scholarship program is that the awardees will continue their commitment to UIHC by providing excellent end-of-life care and by helping to mentor other health care professionals to do the same.
- Implications for broader implementation include that other healthcare organizations should strongly consider providing scholarship support for bedside nurses to enroll in the online ELNEC program.
- Only by improving the knowledge and skill of healthcare providers will we meet the goal of improving the quality of end-of-life care across our country.