Promoting Patient Self-Advocacy

Background
The National Patient Safety Foundation (2014) recommends that patients and families be included as a part of their healthcare team. Self-advocacy is one way to foster patient engagement and inclusivity, resulting in a comprehensive healthcare team. Creating an environment where it is safe to speak up is important to improving outcomes, satisfaction, quality, and safety (Maurer et al., 2012). When healthcare provider educates the patient on self-advocacy, it not only empowers the patient, but also facilitates a partnership between the patient and the healthcare team.

Local problem
Assessment of the current, local, healthcare environment revealed no deliberate or formal teaching on patient self-advocacy. Patients receive a Patient Rights and Responsibilities pamphlet during admission or registration process, without education or teaching. One initiative related to self-advocacy that has already been implemented includes signs in inpatient rooms about speaking up for safety and asking the provider if they have cleaned their hands.

Methods
The project will be implemented on the Progressive Care Unit at SRMH (Sentara Rockingham Memorial Hospital). SRMH is a 238-bed not-for-profit hospital, and part of a 12-hospital system. Patients admitted to progressive care unit and identified with a diagnosis of heart failure, will be included in this project. Number of participants in this project is currently unknown but targeted at 20-50 participants. Project implementation will start January 2019 and continue for three months. It is the goal of this project to implement a plan to improve the self-advocacy of patients and increase patient engagement. A pre and post patient self-advocacy survey will be administered to heart failure patients who consent to participate. Participants will also receive verbal education in adjunct with video education. Approval for the project was received from the internal IRB process at SRMH via expedited review, as well as additional approval from the JMU IRB.

Interventions
Participants will receive verbal education with the Patient Rights and Responsibilities pamphlet, in conjunction with two selected videos from the Tigr Education System: “Questions are the Answer” and “Where Errors Occur and How to Avoid Them”. A pre and post self-advocacy survey will be given before and after education.

Results
The results are TBD.

Conclusions/Implications
If empowering patients to be self-advocates positively impacts patient satisfaction, confidence, and readmission rates, implications for future practice can include deliberate education on advocacy to patients and healthcare providers.

References