

Sutter Health Institute for Research & Education (SHIRE)

San Francisco Community Approach to Improve Palliative Care May 2010

Goal: Improve palliative care in the San Francisco Bay Area through assessment, planning, coordination, education, and outreach.

Problem: Needs for palliative care are increasing because of the aging population with advanced chronic disease. Effective programs offer symptom management, home visits, spiritual and other counseling. Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (**POLST**) facilitate identification of end-of-life patients and dialogue on treatment preferences. However, underutilization of palliative and residential care options that increase comfort and lower costs of care continues.

Purpose:

- assess the quality, adequacy and utilization of palliative care services in SF and identify needs
- link and coordinate existing efforts to improve palliative care utilization in SF
- design and implement an action plan for improving palliative care in SF
- provide targeted outreach to underserved and minority populations in SF

Program Team: SHIRE will work with a broad and influential set of partners to devise and implement an action plan for San Francisco that will make a measurable impact on the awareness and use of palliative care options. Partners on the grant team that will help carry out project tasks include the SF Medical Society, SF Department of Health, UC-San Francisco, Ethnic Health Institute at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, the San Francisco Bay Area Network for End of Life Care, and the Sutter Health Sac-Sierra Region Palliative Care Program.

Needs Assessment & Services Inventory

Collect, analyze and report data on the characteristics of current and potential palliative care-appropriate populations, inventory existing services to meet the need and describe remaining gaps

Summit and Action Plan Convene a summit of approximately 50 partners to kick off the community-wide initiative and formulate approaches to address identified needs

Implement Plan Enact steps laid out in community action plan, such as POLST training sessions

Evaluation & Dissemination Evaluate impact of approach on improving awareness of palliative care options, dissemination of tools, and reduced hospitalizations

We welcome participation in the coalition by Bay Area health departments, mayor's offices, medical societies, medical groups, hospitals, residential and home care providers, health plans, foundations, and patient advocates.