

End of Life: improving access to patient care preferences

Patients reassured their urgent care plan preferences are shared with appropriate health professionals after Epro develops End of Life care plans for a Global Digital Exemplar.

The challenge

The final stages of life with a terminal illness can be a lonely and anxious time. Healthcare professionals provide as much support as possible, and it is essential that top class specialist palliative care spans hospitals, community and hospices. Faster, more efficient ways to coordinate high quality end of life care are required for the growing number of people in need of specialist palliative care.

NHS England says recording patients' wishes around the last days of life, and making them available to medical staff and carers is vital for patient experience improvements. To achieve this, one Global Digital Exemplar (GDE) embarked on a project to record this information digitally and make it available in a standardised, easy-to-access way.

The solution

The GDE NHS trust wanted to record End of Life care preferences and make them available throughout its hospital and in the community. The trust asked Epro to design and implement a standalone solution which linked the End of Life care plan to the current installed Epro system. The document is updated by staff throughout the patient's admission in hospital and records information such as an individualised care plan, a hospital escalation plan, advice for community care, information about medication and discharge. The notes are available for medical staff to action, anywhere and anytime in the hospital. The End of Life note integrates with, and can be automatically distributed with the discharge summary to the GP.



Results

The End of Life note functionality was developed by Epro within just four months. This followed a user-centred approach with several iterations of testing and design enhancements to ensure it met the requirements of clinical users. The solution delivers the following benefits:

- Patient preferences accessible throughout the hospital regardless of department or specialty
- Time savings for staff searching for patient preferences and information
- Information about End of Life preferences available on re-admission
- Distribution of appropriate information to the GPs via the discharge summary
- Flexibility in information collection, avoiding delayed discharges
- Information can be collected at different times during an admission
- Local configuration of information fields reduces risk of loss, and supports carrying forward relevant data, whilst tracking and updating user preferences such as language choice
- Audit and monitoring – ability to review a list of patients discharged without completed forms, or missed review dates
- Seamless integration to existing EPRs, meaning users do not have to log in twice



“The trust already uses many of our solutions and wanted to extend its capability with easy access and an audit trail of the agreed care plan with the patient to help medical staff ensure the highest standard of care by putting patient wishes first.”

Dr Francesca Leithold, Head of Professional Services, Epro

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