Shared Decision Making: Empowering the Bedside Nurse

Stephanie M. Slack, RN, BSN, Jean M. Boguslawski, RN, BSN, Rachel M. Eickhoff, RN, BSN, Kristi A. Klein, RN, BSN, Teresa M. Pepin, RN, MSN, CNS, Kevin Schrandt, RN, BSN, Carrie A. Wise, RN, BSN, and Jody A. Zylstra, RN, BSN

Shared decision making is a process that has empowered specialty nurses at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, to solve a practice concern. Staff nurses recognized a lack of concise, collated information available that described what nurses need to know when caring for patients receiving chemotherapy. Many aspects of the administration process were knowledge and experience based and not easily retrievable. The Hematology/Oncology/Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Practice Committee identified this as a significant practice issue. Ideas were brainstormed regarding how to make the information available to nursing colleagues. The Chemotherapy Yellow Pages is a resource that was developed to facilitate the rapid retrieval of pertinent information for bedside nurses. The content of this article outlines a model of shared decision making and the processes used to address and resolve the practice concern.

Shared decision making in clinical practice is an essential component in providing the best care to every patient every day and facilitates, not controls, patient decision making. In the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, the Hematology/Oncology/Blood and Marrow Transplant (Hem Onc/BMT) Clinical Practice Committee is one example. The committee consists of a member of the Hem Onc/BMT Nursing Leadership Committee, a clinical nurse specialist, and a staff RN representative from the hematology, medical oncology, blood and marrow transplant units, and float staff. Participation on the committee is on a volunteer basis with support from each nurse manager. A representative from the infusion therapy department and a continuous improvement specialist serve as ad hoc members. The functions of the specialty practice committee include providing coordination and guidance in the specialty area and promoting a framework for decision making that places patients’ needs first (Hem Onc/BMT Clinical Practice Committee, n.d.).

Every nurse at the authors’ facility is expected to understand the shared decision-making process, and the model is included in the formal orientation process. Nurse leaders encourage the process as decisions are made throughout the Department of Nursing. One important facet of shared decision making in the Department of Nursing was conceptualized and operationalized through the formation of specialty nursing practice committees. The Hematology/Oncology/Blood and Marrow Transplant (Hem Onc/BMT) Clinical Practice Committee is one example. The committee consists of a member of the Hem Onc/BMT Nursing Leadership Committee, a clinical nurse specialist, and a staff RN representative from the hematology, medical oncology, blood and marrow transplant units, and float staff. Participation on the committee is on a volunteer basis with support from each nurse manager. A representative from the infusion therapy department and a continuous improvement specialist serve as ad hoc members. The functions of the specialty practice committee include providing coordination and guidance in the specialty area and promoting a framework for decision making that places patients’ needs first (Hem Onc/BMT Clinical Practice Committee, n.d.).

The staff resource, titled the Chemotherapy Yellow Pages, was the result of brainstorming by the committee in an effort to resolve a practice concern. Although many books are available regarding a multitude of cytotoxic agents, they often are cumbersome and difficult to reference. In addition, experienced Hem Onc/BMT nurses had

Submitted October 2004. Accepted for publication May 21, 2005.

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/05.CJON.725-727