**BACKGROUND**

- Children with critical congenital heart defects (CHD)
- Multiple surgeries
- Prolonged cumulative hospitalization stays
- Complications/prognostic uncertainties
- Parents & families of these patients
  - Disrupted family life; increased stress
  - Challenging medical decision
- Pediatric Palliative Care (PPC) teams
  - Support families antenatally and postnatally
  - Help parents clarify goals of care
- Hesitation to involve PPC in patients with CHD

**OBJECTIVE**

Increase the percent of patients with critical CHD who receive a PPC consult by 50% by November 2019.

**DESIGN/METHODS**

- November 2018 to November 2019
  - Stakeholders: surgeons, cardiologists, palliative care providers, pediatric and neonatal intensive care physicians, residents, advanced practice providers, and nurses
  - IHI model for improvement
    1) clarify current use of pediatric palliative care
    2) explore common causes of low use (Figure 1)
    3) provide education about pediatric palliative care
    4) clarify location/timing of ideal PPC consult
    5) identify CHD subpopulation deemed appropriate for palliative care involvement

**OUTCOME & PROCESS MEASURES**

- **Outcome measure**: was percentage of patients hospitalized for critical CHD who received a PPC consult analyzed using a run chart.
- **Process measure**: was number of cases of critical CHD between consults analyzed using a Shewhart G-chart.

**RESULTS**

- Baseline six months (May 2018-October 2018, n=42): 1 PPC consult per 11 infants and neonates
- Intervention period (November 2018-November 2019; n=88):
  - Percentage of infants with a consult trended upward (Figure 2)
  - Number of eligible patients between consults improved from 5.1 to 1 (Figure 3)
  - One parent of a prenatally diagnosed patient was seen antenatally by the PPC team.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- **Outcome**
  - PPC consults for patients with CHD increased.
- **Future work**
  - Track percent of patients with CHD who receive PPC consults
  - Develop educational materials for parents
  - Assess parental response to PPC

**Figure 1.** Common causes of low PPC use by patients with CHD in our PICU. Causes targeted for improvement shown in yellow.

**Figure 2.** Quarterly percent of children <1 year with CHD in the PICU receiving a palliative care consult.

**Figure 3.** The number of eligible patients without consults between each consult placed. This type of chart is useful for infrequent, unpredictable events.

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