



# Home is Best: Minimizing ER Transfers from a Long Term Care Facility

Ruth Demian

## Background

Home is best for most frail seniors in residential care, thus we must minimize our emergency room (ER) transfers. Patients are becoming frailer and more complex entering residential care with an average length of life of 16-18 months following admission. An ER can be very frightening and stressful for these residents, many who have advanced dementia. Remaining in their "HOME" helps maintain a sense of security and decreases confusion, risk of hospital acquired complications and undesired treatment.

## Aim

Reducing Emergency Room transfers from Langley Gardens Care Facility to 2 or less per month by May 2019.

## Project Design & Strategy

Strategies employed in this project included:

### 1. COMMUNICATE

- Start goals of care (GoC) conversations within 1<sup>st</sup> week of admission
- Distribute a "Getting to know you better questionnaire" (values and GoC questionnaire) upon admission
- Document advanced care plan GoC and serious illness conversation guide (SICG) on green sleeve
- Restructure care conferences to focus on quality of life and GoC

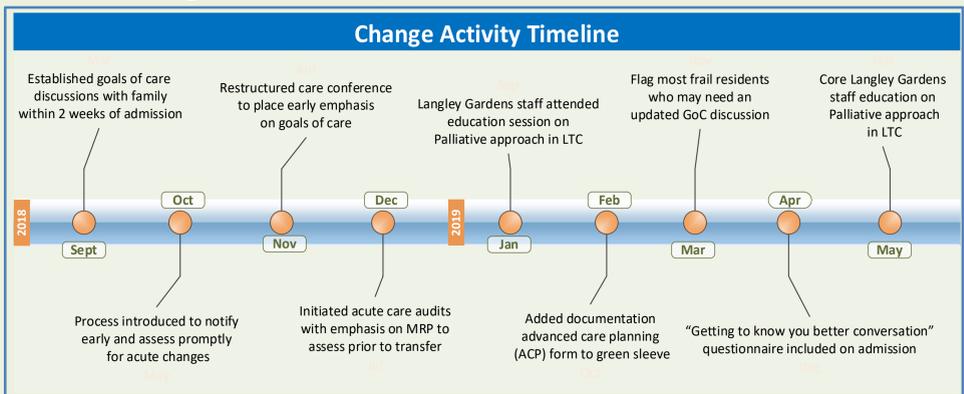
### 2. COLLABORATE

- Engage and value all health care team roles
- Educate care team in palliative approach to care (e.g. formal events, staff meetings huddles)
- Family education (e.g. make written resources available on topics such as the pathway to dementia, understanding what frailty is).

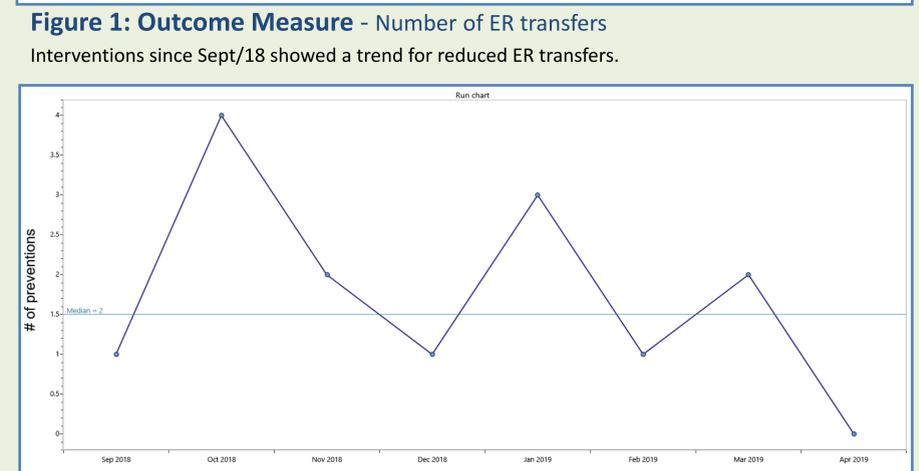
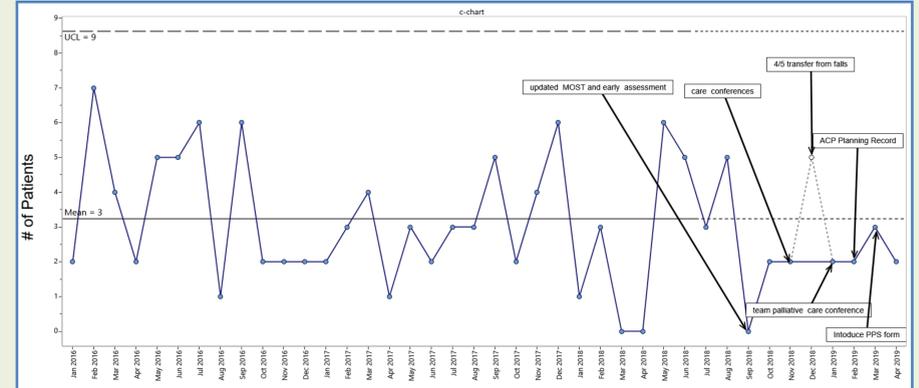
### 3. CAPTURE

- Flag most frail using tools: PPS, Frailty Index
- Identify, inform MRP & manage early acute changes (e.g. dyspnea)

## Changes Implemented



## Results



	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19
# of preventions	1	4	2	1	3	1	2	0
Total Acute Care Visit	4	6	5	1	4	3	3	1

Responding promptly to acute changes can prevent ER transfers.

## Lessons Learned

### Home is Best...

- Decision to transfer to ER is often based on goals of care so **start early** because it may take several formal and informal discussions
- Trust and a **caring environment** are intangibles that go along way in these sensitive discussions
- GoC and wishes are **precious** and must be documented or will be lost and may lead to undesired medical treatment including stressful ER transfers
- Early onsite management for acute changes prevent ER transfer
- Valuing the diverse perspectives** of the Langley Gardens QI team enhanced our ability to overcome barriers and achieve our goals
- It is a **cultural shift** to incorporate patient values and goals into health care planning decisions

**H**ave early conversations to build trust & understanding

**O**nsite assessment for acute management

**M**inimize undesired treatment by documenting patient values & wishes

**E**ngage & value everyone on the healthcare team

### QI Team

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### References

- Fraser Health CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE: Integrating a Palliative Approach to Care in Long-Term Care, 2018, 1-21