

■ CNE Article

The Oncology Phone: An Innovative Program for the Management of the Oncology Population in an Academic Medical Center

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The Oncology Nursing Leadership Team at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania designed and implemented a phone consultation and intervention service to address increasing needs for specialty oncology nursing consultation and care for patients located on nononcology units. This article describes the planning, implementation, and evaluation of this service, which the team named the oncology phone. The service is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week by members of the Oncology Nursing Leadership Team and designated senior members of the clinical nursing staff. Consultation is initiated by any clinical nurse throughout the hospital who determines the need for oncology nursing expertise. Those needs include support for chemotherapy administration, symptom management, and care coordination. Data are collected from each call as well as subsequent face-to-face consultations and interventions. Evaluation of the data reveals important areas for education. A similar program may be valuable to other inpatient settings in addressing the needs of patients and staff.

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Digital Object Identifier:10.1188/13.CJON.17-04AP

Demands for oncology nursing care are increasing in the inpatient setting when patients with cancer are not located on a dedicated oncology nursing unit. As the incidence and prevalence of cancer continues to increase, oncology nurses will be confronted with how to best deliver high-quality care to this expanding population. With the growth of the oncology population and expansion of treatment options, staff are challenged to meet the care needs of an increasingly large and highly complex group of inpatients on the oncology service. Nurses are commonly faced with challenges when patients with cancer are treated in units that do not specialize in cancer care. In the off-unit locations, patients with cancer have specialized needs that range from cancer symptom management to the administration

of complex, multi-drug treatment regimens typically unfamiliar to the staff on these units.

In addition to the expansion of patient care, antineoplastic agents are more commonly being prescribed for nononcologic indications. Oncology nurses are responsible for the delivery of these drugs because they are the nurses who are chemotherapy certified. Because of the expanded use of these agents, an immediate need exists for innovative strategies for management of complex oncologic diagnoses and treatments, as well as nononcologic indications requiring chemotherapy certification. From strategies developed, collecting and analyzing data surrounding the work of the innovation are important. This will assist in driving nursing practice and will inform nursing leaders of adjustments that should be made to current practice.