



Advance Care Planning Decisions

CASE STUDY

Providence Institute
for Human Caring





CASE STUDY: ACP DECISIONS

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Providence Institute for Human Caring Implements ACP Decisions' Video Library to Support a Whole-Person Care Approach



I. Background

Delivering a comprehensive range of health and social services to upwards of five million patients across seven states, **Providence is the fourth largest health system in the U.S.** Ira Byock, M.D., FAAHPM, founded the Institute for Human Caring in 2014 to better serve the needs of Providence patients and their families living with serious illness and facing medical decision making.

The primary goal of the Institute for Human Caring is to provide care for the whole person that addresses an individual's unique physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. The Institute supports Providence clinicians by offering resources, training and support that enable them to practice a holistic approach that incorporates patients' values, goals and priorities with their medical care.

II. Challenge

At the heart of the Institute's mission is the Providence promise to: *"Know me, care for me, ease my way."* Advance care planning is an integral part of carrying out this promise.

As with many healthcare organizations, Providence clinicians were challenged with initiative fatigue, competing priorities and

time constraints. Another obstacle was ensuring that patients truly grasped the benefits and risks of their medical options after advance care planning conversations.

As Matthew Gonzales, M.D., FAAHPM, Chief Medical Information Officer for the Institute, explains:



"We were hearing from our clinicians that it takes too much time to explain these complicated concepts, and patients don't walk away feeling like they really understand things."

Key Benefits to ACP Decisions Videos

-  Evidence-based solution
-  Increases staff comfort and confidence
-  Improves efficiency of advance care planning
-  Addresses issues of low health literacy
-  Enhances patient understanding of options



All too often, patients would turn to unreliable online sources to try to comprehend their treatment choices.

The Institute for Human Caring team identified the need to support clinicians by helping them communicate in a way that is more consistent with patients' health literacy levels. They also wanted to promote a deeper understanding among patients and families of their medical options, empowering them to make more informed decisions.



III. Finding a Solution

Even as a trained palliative medicine physician with well-honed communication skills, Dr. Gonzales **recognized a limitation in his ability to have patients understand and appreciate the importance of these conversations.** *"I'm trained in using simple words, showing examples to people and talking slowly to make sure people have a good understanding and literacy," he says. "However, there is a real difference between hearing and seeing."*

The team felt that adding video patient decision aids to their advance care planning initiative would help them meet their objective of supporting both clinicians and patients in the decision-making process.

The ACP Decisions video library offered Providence clinicians an evidence-based visual learning resource they could share with patients to foster a clearer understanding of their medical options. Dr. Gonzales attests,

"I don't think there is a service out there that offers what ACP Decisions does — with high-quality, easy-to-understand content that has been vetted in randomized controlled trials."

IV. Implementing the ACP Decisions Video Library

The ACP Decisions video pilot began in 2015 with the case management departments and critical care areas at two hospitals. As is often the case with process change, it did not immediately take off. Michael Drummond, External Affairs and Communications Director for the Institute, describes how the team had a *"if you build it, they will come conundrum"* regarding the video library. *"We had this wonderful library of videos provided by ACP Decisions, and due to workflow issues or being unaccustomed to using these short videos, the adoption rate was initially a challenge."*

A. Improving the Workflow

As the initiative rolled out, the team was able to overcome workflow issues with technological fixes. They integrated the tools into their electronic health record (EHR) with alerts set for individuals in targeted populations who lack documentation of advance care planning or an advance directive in their patient record.



Providence now has around 44,000 nurses and 25,000 doctors who have access to the ACP Decisions video library. **In their inpatient and ambulatory environments, clinicians can prescribe the videos through the Xealth® platform on EPIC and have them sent via email to the patient. Home care teams use the ACP Decisions mobile application to share videos with patients and their families.**

The team incorporated automated patient outreach to promote engagement. Prior to a scheduled primary care visit, patients who meet specific age and/or medical parameters and do not have an advance care planning document on record, receive an email to let them know the discussion may come up during their appointment. The email also provides links to a short video on advance directives and to advance directive forms in the patient's preferred language.

B. Getting Buy-In

Fortunately, gaining the buy-in from leadership and clinicians was just a matter of exposing them to the content. The team has observed that once clinicians watch the videos, they are impressed with the high-quality, patient-friendly production and evidence-based content that is short enough to easily incorporate into a clinical encounter.

An ongoing challenge the team has faced is fostering broad culture change that results in full engagement around advance care planning, especially early on in a patient's treatment journey. Dr. Gonzales acknowledges the root of this issue is a feeling of being overwhelmed from competing priorities: *"I think we face, like everyone does, this sense of, well what's the quality metric of the month or the day?"*

The team's response has been to stress the importance of ACP planning conversations, facilitate workflow process, and make the videos as easy as possible to access for both the clinicians and patients.

V. Benefits Resulting from the Initiative

Monthly and weekly performance metrics along with feedback from site champions, leadership, and patients highlight some key benefits Providence has accomplished by utilizing the ACP Decisions video library.

- **More engagement with ACP**

Performance metrics show that clinicians and patients are engaging in advance care planning conversations much more frequently because of the ACP Decisions video library implementation. Between August 2019 and August 2020, 6,363 ACP Decisions videos were viewed due to automated emails that were sent to patients at practices across the western U.S. who had upcoming annual wellness visits.





- **Increased advance directive completion**

Monthly data tracking shows a direct correlation between patients who watch a prescribed video and completion / documentation of an advance directive.

The automated email program resulted in a ten fold increase in rate of advance directives returned between August 2019 and August 2020.

"I believe this is a great way to engage patients prior to their office appointments," Andres Jimenez, M.D., lead physician at Providence St. Joseph Health's San Pedro Primary Care Clinic said. "It will set up the discussion on advance directives in a positive manner and prepare patients for this conversation when they arrive in the office."

"Having patients automatically receive a video before their appointment is a convenient way for them to start planning their wishes in a comfortable setting – their own home."

– **Jonathan Finley, RN, clinical staff supervisor at Providence St. Joseph Health's San Pedro Primary Care Clinic.**

- **Educational resource for clinicians**

While the primary purpose of the videos is to educate patients and families to empower them to make more informed decisions, they also serve as an educational resource for clinicians. According to Tue Nguyen, the Institute's Manager of Integration, *"It's been really interesting to see how the videos are being used to standardize talking points for clinicians and frontline nurses as they guide advance care planning discussions."*

- **Enhanced decisional confidence**

The team has not yet developed metrics to reflect how family members feel after making complicated medical decisions on behalf of a loved one; however, the team does get positive feedback. *"Having the confidence that they are making the right decision is so, so important, particularly after a loved one dies,"* says Dr. Gonzales. *"Anecdotally, we do hear that when people watch these videos, particularly the ones focused on serious illnesses, they feel more comfortable with their decisions and experience more peace-of-mind."*

- **Real-time performance dashboard**

The clinicians enjoyed the fact that the ACP Decisions platform not only offered patient-friendly educational videos, but the daily, weekly, and monthly usage analytics broken down to the individual hospital or unique code prescribed. This valuable real-time information offers performance improvement planning for both clinicians and patient feedback.

- **Alignment with whole-person care model**

Utilizing the ACP Decisions video library furthers the organization's goal of providing comprehensive care for the whole person. The videos facilitate shared decision making by engaging patients and families around their values, preferences, and priorities.





“Part of the genius of the videos is that they’re done in layman’s terms in easy-to-understand language,” points out Drummond. ***“And not just English, but multiple languages spoken by native speakers. That intentional nod to diversity and inclusion is very powerful.”***

A Strategic Partnership

Today, ACP Decisions is considered one of Providence's key strategic partnerships. The video library is available system-wide to 52 hospitals and more than 1,000 clinics.

When COVID-19 came to the U.S. in early 2020, the first documented patient was cared for at a Providence facility north of Seattle, WA. The Institute worked with ACP Decisions to create an educational video about the virus to keep the public informed. The ACP Decisions platform has also supported the Institute with video content beyond advance care planning with new videos that address COVID-19 in the ICU.

As Dr. Gonzales sums it up: ***“I think in the era of COVID, the video tools are especially important when families can’t physically be in the ICU to talk to clinicians. We all know there’s bad information out there, and having easily accessible, high-quality educational content is so important for patients and families to be able to make good decisions right now.”***

The continued success of the automated emails at the John Wayne Cancer Center in Santa Monica, CA, allows for a system-wide approach for all Providence cancer patients and that expands to additional languages and topics. This tactic offers the Providence enterprise the ability to scale quickly without the full education and implementation requirements from a traditional change management strategy.

ACP Decisions has more than 400 evidence-based video decision support tools that promote effective advance care planning and are easily accessible on a user-friendly technology platform. If your organization is interested in implementing an advance care planning initiative or improving your current efforts, let’s talk!

To learn more about how to improve advance care planning at your facility, visit ACP Decisions at acpdecisions.org or email support@acpdecisions.org

