National RN Case Manager Certificate Program

Practice Development Activity: RNCM Role is Safe, Effective Care Transitions

The CARE (Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable) Act requires hospitals to do 3 things: ask patients if they have a family caregiver, contact that person if the patient is to be discharged or transferred, and teach the family caregiver how to provide the care the patient will need after discharge.

An estimated 30 million friends and family members provide care for an older person, whether it is help with daily activities like bathing and eating, long-distance care coordination, or short-term care for an illness or injury. Millions more are caregivers for younger disabled people and those facing serious illness.

A groundbreaking study by the AARP Public Policy Institute and the United Hospital Fund supported by The John A. Hartford Foundation revealed that nearly half of these family caregivers are performing complex medical and nursing tasks such as cleaning wounds, giving injections, and managing multiple medications. Little training, if any, is provided for these difficult tasks and this can be particularly dangerous after a hospitalization.

The Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act has received bipartisan support from state lawmakers across the country. While slightly different in each state, the CARE Act has three common essential elements. The law requires that hospitals:

1. Record the name of the family caregiver on the medical record of your loved one.
2. Inform the family caregiver when the patient is to be discharged.
3. Provide the family caregiver with education and live instruction of the medical tasks he or she will need to perform for the patient at home.

Activity:

1. Watch the video "How the CARE Act Works" posted on the AARP website (you will need to scroll down the website page to find) at: https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/local/info-2017/care-act-aarp-wallet-card.html?cmp=RDRCT-4e6ca682-20200402
2. Review the States listed to see if your State has passed the CARE Act. If it has, click on your State, and review the information posted.
3. Think about how you can apply the aims of the CARE Act to your RNCM practice.
    - What concepts about this policy do you find important to improving health outcomes for patients?
    - Are there steps you could take to strengthen caregiver involvement in discharge and care transitions?

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