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Using Technology to Develop and Distribute Patient Education Storyboards Across a Health System

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Purpose/Objectives: To describe the successful implementation of a centrally designed and managed patient education storyboard project using Microsoft® PowerPoint® in a large multihospital system and physician-based practice settings.

Data Sources: Journal articles, project evaluation, and clinical and educational experience.

Data Synthesis: The use of posters, bulletin boards, and storyboards as educational strategies has been reported widely. Two multidisciplinary committees applied new technology to develop storyboards for patient, family, and general public education.

Conclusions: Technology can be used to coordinate centralized development of patient education posters, improving accuracy and content of patient education across a healthcare system while streamlining the development and review process and avoiding duplication of work effort.

Implications for Nursing: Storyboards are excellent sources of unit-based current, consistent patient education; reduce duplication of efforts; enhance nursing computer competencies; market nursing expertise; and promote nurse educators.

Key Points . . .

- Using readily available technology can streamline the development and distribution of educational materials, reduce duplication of efforts, and maximize available teaching resources.
- A clearly defined, collaborative development process and a project coordinator can make storyboards a cost-effective educational resource and expand their educational reach.
- Storyboards prepared in “page” sections can be adapted for other uses, including tabletop displays and flip charts.

Finding the time, resources, and supplies to develop patient education materials can be daunting for staff nurses, particularly as resources become more limited. Two committees, comprised of nurses, social workers, and other members of the multidisciplinary team, from the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI) took a new approach to this challenge by using technology to develop and distribute storyboards for patient, family, and general public education. The Patient Education Working Group (PEWG), which focuses on systemwide patient education, in conjunction with the Cancer Awareness Committee, which focuses on community education, began developing 9- to 12-panel centrally distributed storyboards where patients with cancer are cared for across the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Health System (see Figure 1). UPMC Health System serves a primarily English-speaking community and offers care in urban, suburban, and rural areas across western Pennsylvania.

The use of posters, bulletin boards, and storyboards as educational strategies has been reported widely in the literature. Much attention has been paid to the construction of posters, particularly for staff development and research presentations

(Bach, McDaniel, & Poole, 1994; McCann, Sramac, & Rudy, 1993). Advantages of posters as educational strategies have been identified, including their low cost, portability, ease of update, and ability to allow self-paced learning (Duchin & Sherwood, 1990; Hayes & Childress, 1999; Healey & Hoffman, 1999; Thurber & Asselin, 1999).

More recently, the use of poster displays as “storyboards” for disseminating process or performance improvement has been reported (Hayes & Childress, 1999; Hetherington, 1999). Typically, storyboards have multiple panels that are read through in an organized way. PEWG and the Cancer Awareness Committee believed that the storyboard was broader than the traditional poster concept in that educational objectives and a systematic multidisciplinary team approach were used for development.

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