

## **Abstract:**

### **Primary Palliative Care in Heart Failure**

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#### **Introduction:**

For patients with chronic conditions such as heart failure (HF), there comes a time when goals of care shift, and discussions about symptom management and end of life planning become essential. Analysis of previous research indicates there is a subjective benefit of early intro to palliative care (PC) in HF patients, but no standardized protocol for how or when to provide these services. Our study explores one method of identifying HF patients who may benefit from PC, and proposes a framework for approaching these visits.

#### **Methods:**

With our cardiology and PC colleagues, we developed a method of screening to identify HF patients who may benefit from our intervention. We then performed randomization of these patients to two groups, control vs intervention, to compare our staged PC intervention to standard of care. Based on our data, we identified multiple social barriers to providing and evaluating PC interventions in chronic diseases like HF. We did also identify a higher rate of follow up in patients who were receiving PC from their primary care physicians specifically.

#### **Results:**

In conclusion, early implementation of standardized PC for HF patients may be beneficial, but more data is required. Further research aimed at implementing our strategies may be warranted, specifically in a primary care setting with special consideration of social barriers encountered in chronic disease. A standardized screening tool and palliative care plan, if successful, would contribute to our ability to provide comprehensive and compassionate care for our patients, and would be feasible to apply in a wide variety of primary care offices.