

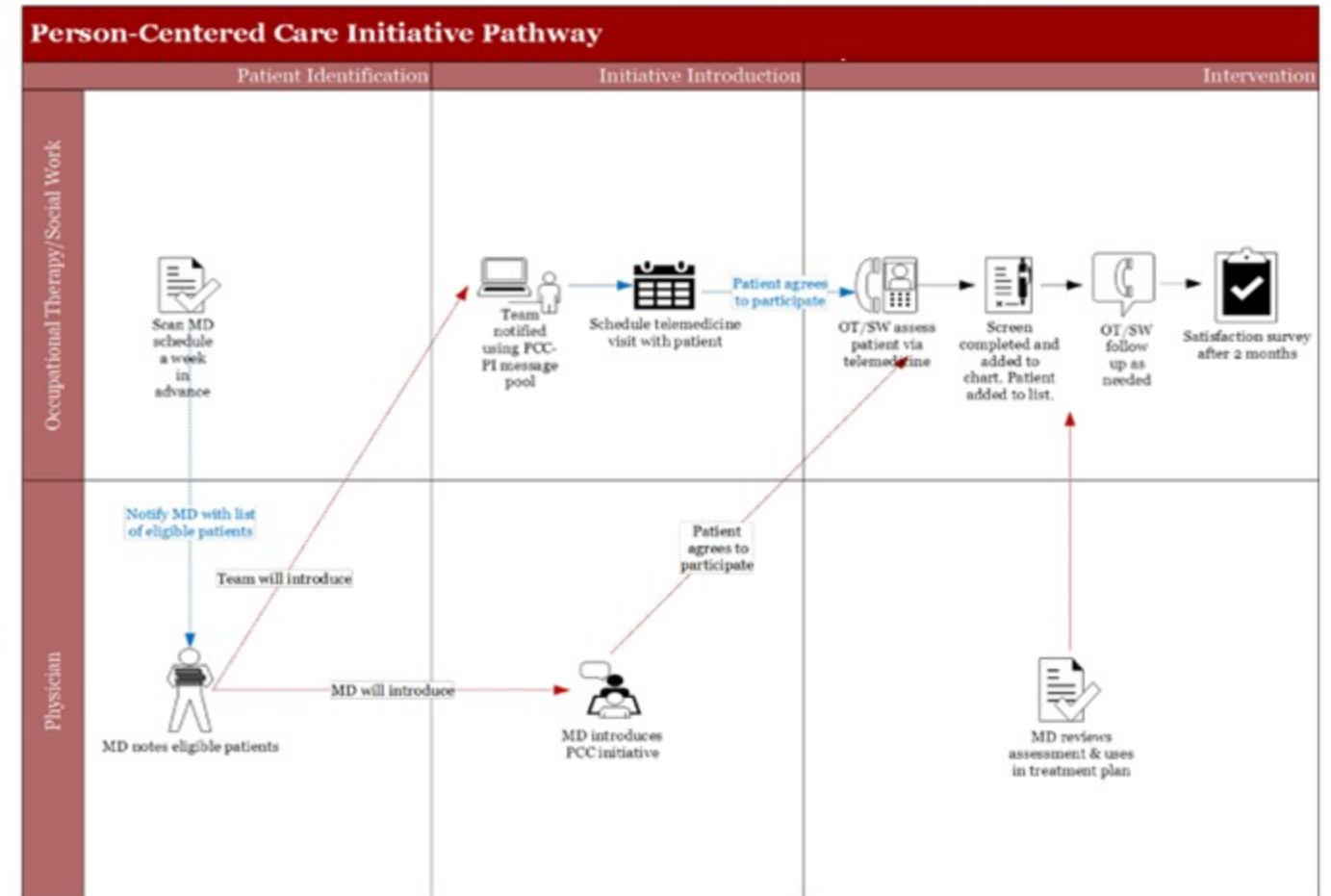
Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly changing how healthcare is delivered, with telemedicine and other creative solutions being implemented to meet patient needs. Effective methods to care for high-risk populations, such as older patients requiring cancer treatment, are critical in light of ongoing complex needs and novel challenges presented by the current pandemic.

Study Design

We propose a quality improvement project of person-centered care that will inform the wider healthcare community on best modalities to engage and deliver healthcare to vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis. Persons aged 65 and older with advanced stage solid cancer will be eligible. Patients will undergo evaluation by a multidisciplinary team with the aim of addressing “what matters most”¹ from the patient’s perspective. These needs may include loneliness, depression, cognition, functional independence, quality of life, and other patient-identified goals. (Fig 1.)

Fig 1. PCC Workflow



Aims

- **EDUCATE** patients to use telehealth and other resources available to them to foster behaviors that will mitigate effects of the pandemic
- **EMPOWER** patients and caregivers to emphasize personal values and goals in discussions/decisions about their care
- **ENGAGE** community resources to better support older oncology patients
- **INCORPORATE** person-centered care delivered using virtual platforms to older patients with advanced stage cancer
- **DEVELOP** generalizable knowledge and resources to educate and support high risk older adults with cancer and other chronic diseases in the community

Analysis

Using both quantitative and qualitative analyses of our experience, we will collect data to identify goals and areas of need that are most important to optimizing patient care. This will be used to develop strategies to effectively engage and inform patients and their community.

Conclusions

With an improved interprofessional approach, we aim to demonstrate that patient-centered care can mitigate the effects of the pandemic on higher-risk populations. Our work will educate and engage patients, communities, and the general healthcare system to better serve vulnerable persons during the pandemic.

References

1. Schrag, D., Hershman, D. L. & Basch, E. Oncology Practice During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *JAMA* vol. 323 2005 (2020).