

The Problem

Integrating palliative care earlier in the process



Most people living with advanced colorectal cancer only receive specialist palliative care in the **last two months of life**, despite research showing the benefit of early palliative care.

METHODS

Pre-Intervention: Apr 1, 2017 – Dec 31, 2018

Intervention start date: Jan 1, 2019

Intervention: Apr 1, 2019 – Dec 31, 2020

Intervention group: Calgary

Control group: Edmonton

Decedents:

- At least 1 Medical Oncology visit in last year of life
- 1st Medical Oncology visit > 120 days before death

Primary Outcome:

- Early Palliative Care (>= 90 days before death)

Fidelity Measures:

- Shared Care Letter Use
- Referrals to Early Palliative Care Nurse Specialist

3 Intervention Components

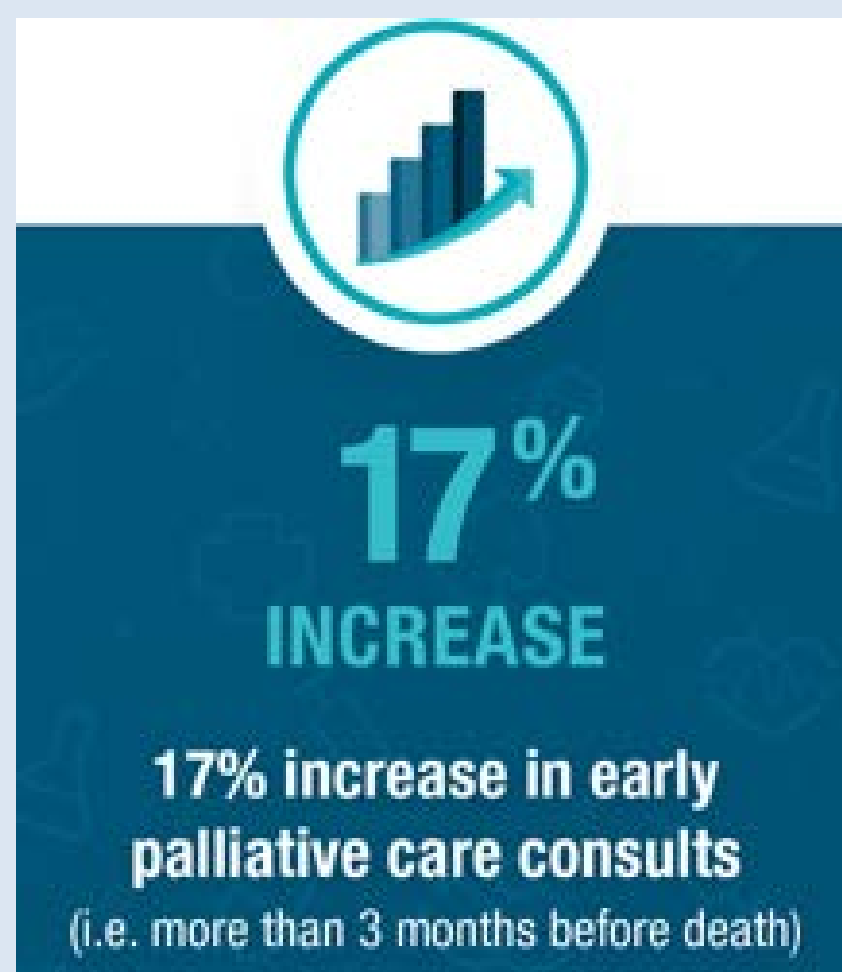
Referred to community-based Clinical Nurse Specialist if they failed, or could not receive, first-line chemotherapy, or had high symptom burden (Edmonton Symptom Assessment System score >=7)

'Shared Care' templated letters sent by medical oncologists to family physicians along with patient letter

Weekly cueing reminders to Oncologists



Oncologist-Facing Intervention with Facilitated Implementation increased Earlier Specialist Palliative Care Use



69 DAYS

69 days of earlier palliative care



30% UPTAKE

30% uptake of shared care letter



2 EXTRA DAYS

People stayed 2 extra days at home in the last 3 months

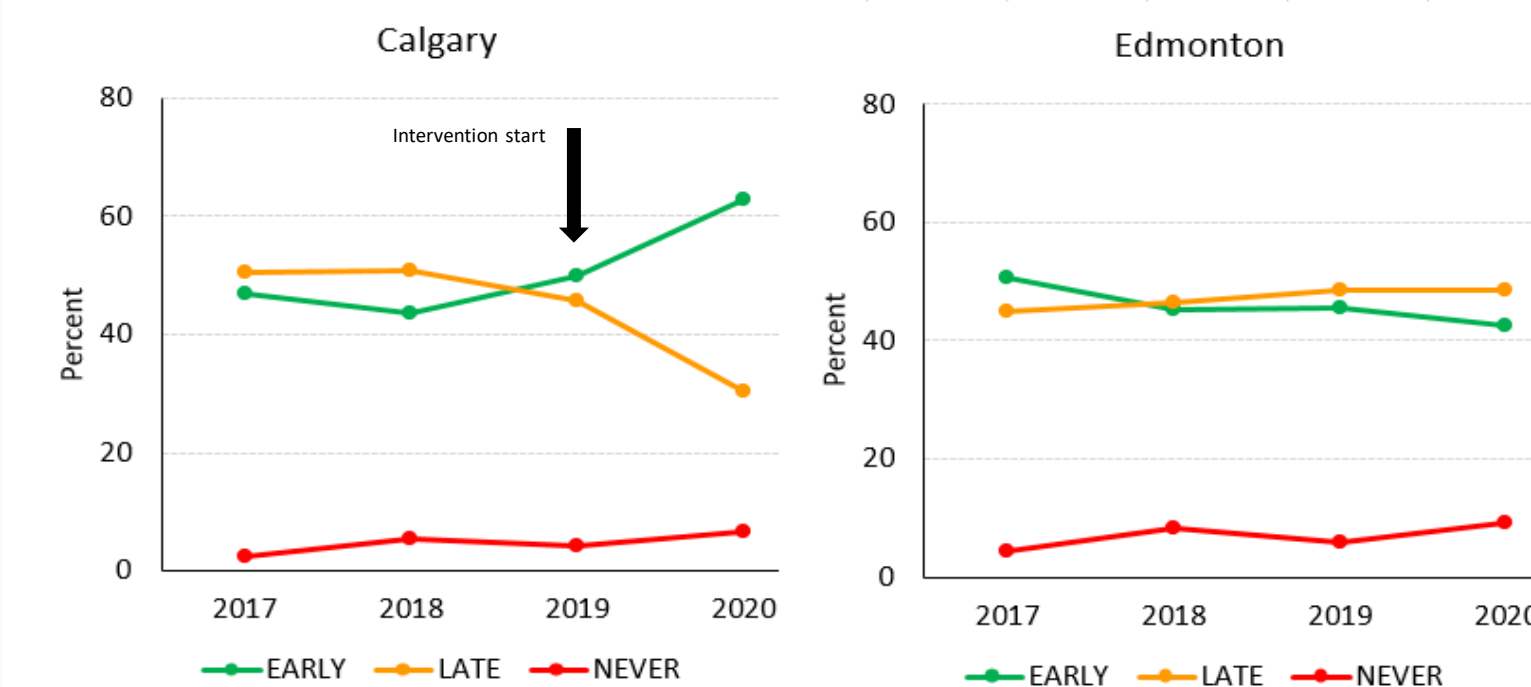


\$4,467 LESS

Cost the system \$4,467 less per patient as a result

RESULTS

Early Palliative Care (%)

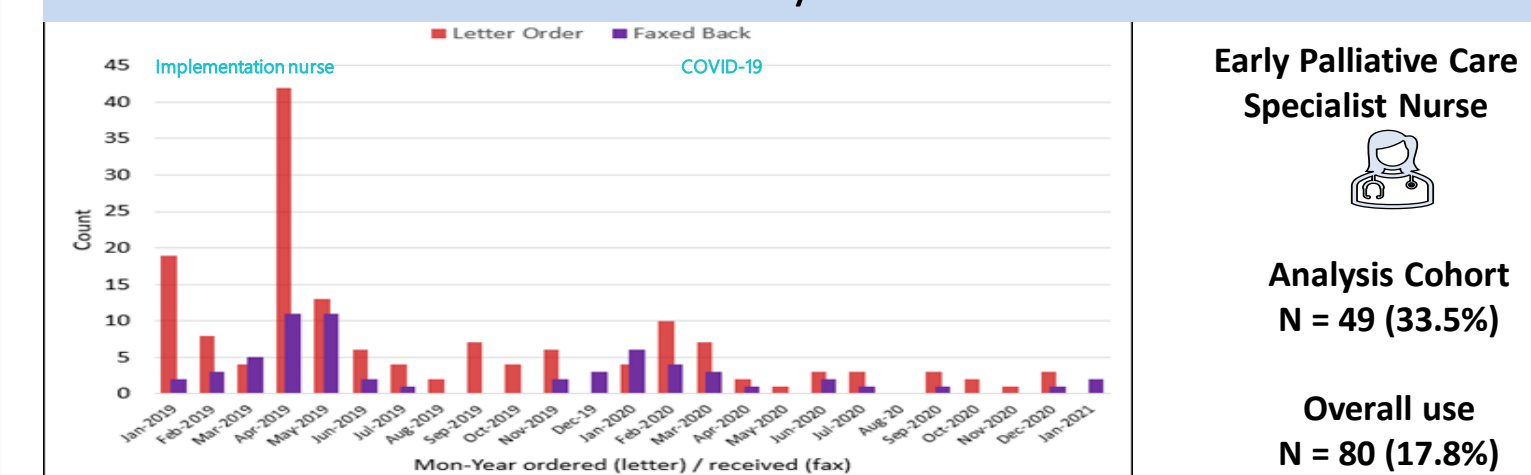


Time Period	Intervention zone (Calgary)		Comparator zone (Edmonton)		Difference in difference estimator (95% CI)	P
	Pre-intervention (Apr '17 – Dec '18)	Intervention (Apr '19 – Dec '20)	Pre-intervention (Apr '17 – Dec '18)	Intervention (Apr '19 – Dec '20)		
Total number of deaths	188	209	153	145		
Referral to specialist PC >90 days before death (proportion, n)*	44.7% (84)	57.4% (120)	47.7% (73)	44.1% (64)	17.0% (2.0%-32.0%)	0.027

Early Palliative Care Duration (days)



Fidelity Metrics



IMPACT

The process is now adopted as standard of care using existing program resources in colorectal cancer care in Calgary. Opportunities are being explored to spread.

The Palliative Care Early and Systematic (PaCES) program is supported by:

