Improving Healthcare Outcomes through Advocacy
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This pilot project seeks to produce advocacy engagement measures (scales) that accurately predict the extent and nature of patient and policy advocacy interventions provided by hospital-based nurses, social workers, and residents and why they provide varying levels of advocacy. The project defines advocacy as the engagement and planned interventions to help patients resolve unaddressed problems and to change dysfunctional policies in hospitals, communities, and governments. It will also obtain feedback from patients and administrators from focus groups. These research procedures will produce useful qualitative data to foster the developing of training and organizational interventions to increase advocacy interventions. The project will develop five scales to be used to identify personal, professional, and organizational factors (independent variables) that help explain the extent specific patients, nurses, social workers, and medical residents participate in patient and policy advocacy. It will develop two scales (dependent variables) to measure the extent they participate in patient and policy advocacy interventions. The project will use statistical procedures to verify that the scales accurately measure these independent and dependent variables. The project will also obtain quantitative data from samples of 100 respectively of nurses, social workers, and residents drawn from a stratified sample of hospitals in Los Angeles County that will include public hospitals, not-for-profit hospitals, hospitals associated with health maintenance organizations (HMOs), hospitals from the Veterans' Administration, and for-profit hospitals. It will obtain preliminary data, as well, from samples of 30 patients and administrators drawn from these hospitals to obtain their perspectives. Data will be obtained in three ways: on-line surveys, personal interviews, and focus groups. This project is relevant to PCORI's three program requirements. It provides a rationale, measurement tools, and data to make advocacy a national research priority to advance patient-centered care. It collects preliminary data to serve as a platform for future research. It identifies an important gap in research methodology and increases knowledge through the development of scales that measure the independent and dependent advocacy variables. It advances PCORI's mission to promote informed persons' health care decisions in a project guided by stakeholders.

RELEVANCE
Millions of Americans possess unresolved problems including failure to honor their ethical rights and lack of quality care, preventive care, culturally-competent care, affordable care, attention to mental problems and community-based care. These problems can harm patients' well-being by aggravating existing health problems and causing new ones. Advocacy can help many patients resolve these problems through advocacy engagement with nurses, social workers, and residents. This research will develop scales to measure accurately the extent and nature of advocacy of specific health professionals and to determine why health professionals provide different levels and kinds of advocacy. It will facilitate the development of training and organizational interventions to facilitate advocacy among patients, administrators, and these health professionals. Advocacy is strongly related to PCORI's desire to promote patient-centered care because it empowers patients to become active participants and encourages professionals and administrators to partner and engage with patients to resolve unaddressed problems.