The purpose of the Butterfly Project was to enhance patient and family centered care for those individuals nearing the end of life. The Butterfly Project begins when a patient or family decides to focus on comfort measures. The butterfly communicates a special caring to all who may be involved with the care.

The butterfly symbolizes:
- Transformation
- Tranquility
- Change
- Hope

**Purpose**

**Description**

- The 6 South Unit Council identified the need to address end of life care on this busy 36 bed medical telemetry unit
- A review of the literature was conducted
- Nursing staff members were interviewed regarding experiences with end of life care
- The unit council worked with an interdisciplinary group to develop & initiate the project
- All unit and interdisciplinary staff working on 6 South received education about the Butterfly Project

**Process**

- Once patients &/or families make a decision to focus on comfort care at the end of life, the nurse caring for the patient is responsible for discussing the Butterfly Project with them
- After receiving permission from the patient and family, the nurse places butterflies outside the room on the patient’s door
- All staff working on 6 South recognize the butterfly as a symbol for a patient who is approaching the end of life

Anecdotal comments from survey respondents:
- “Better than a CMO sign”
- “Nice reminder for staff”

**Evaluation**

- A post implementation survey was sent to all members of the nursing staff (RN, PCA, Unit Secretary) and it revealed:
  - All responders were aware of the project
  - 36% of RN’s had initiated the Butterfly Project
  - 73% of responders had participated in care of a patient Butterfly Project patients
  - 93% of responders felt that the project had a positive impact on end of life care for patients and families

**Next Steps**

- Continue the Butterfly Project on 6 South
- Survey interdisciplinary staff regarding their knowledge of the Butterfly Project
- Consult with the Palliative Care Nurse to expand and improve end of life care
- Collaborate with Nursing Practice Committee and Unit Councils to facilitate implementation on other inpatient units

This visual effect of the butterfly promotes a calm and quiet atmosphere for the patient and family as the continuum of care progresses.