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Memory Cart: Memory-Making Interventions for Nurses to Enhance the Meaningfulness of End-of-Life Care in the ICU

Grace Zimmerman, BSN, RN, CCRN, OCN

Background

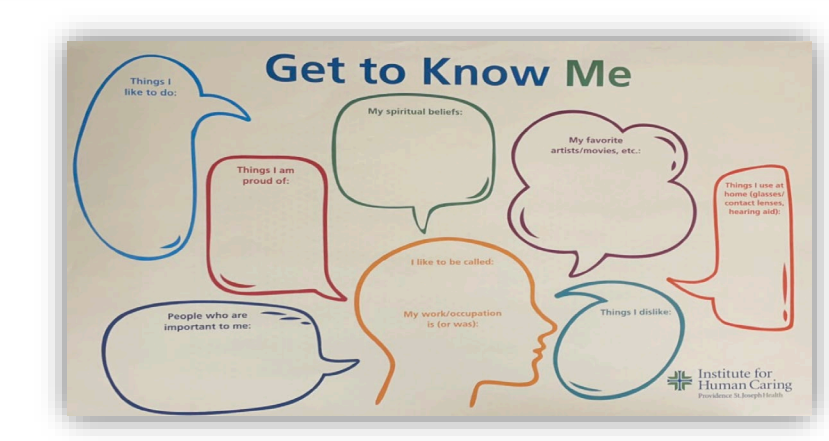
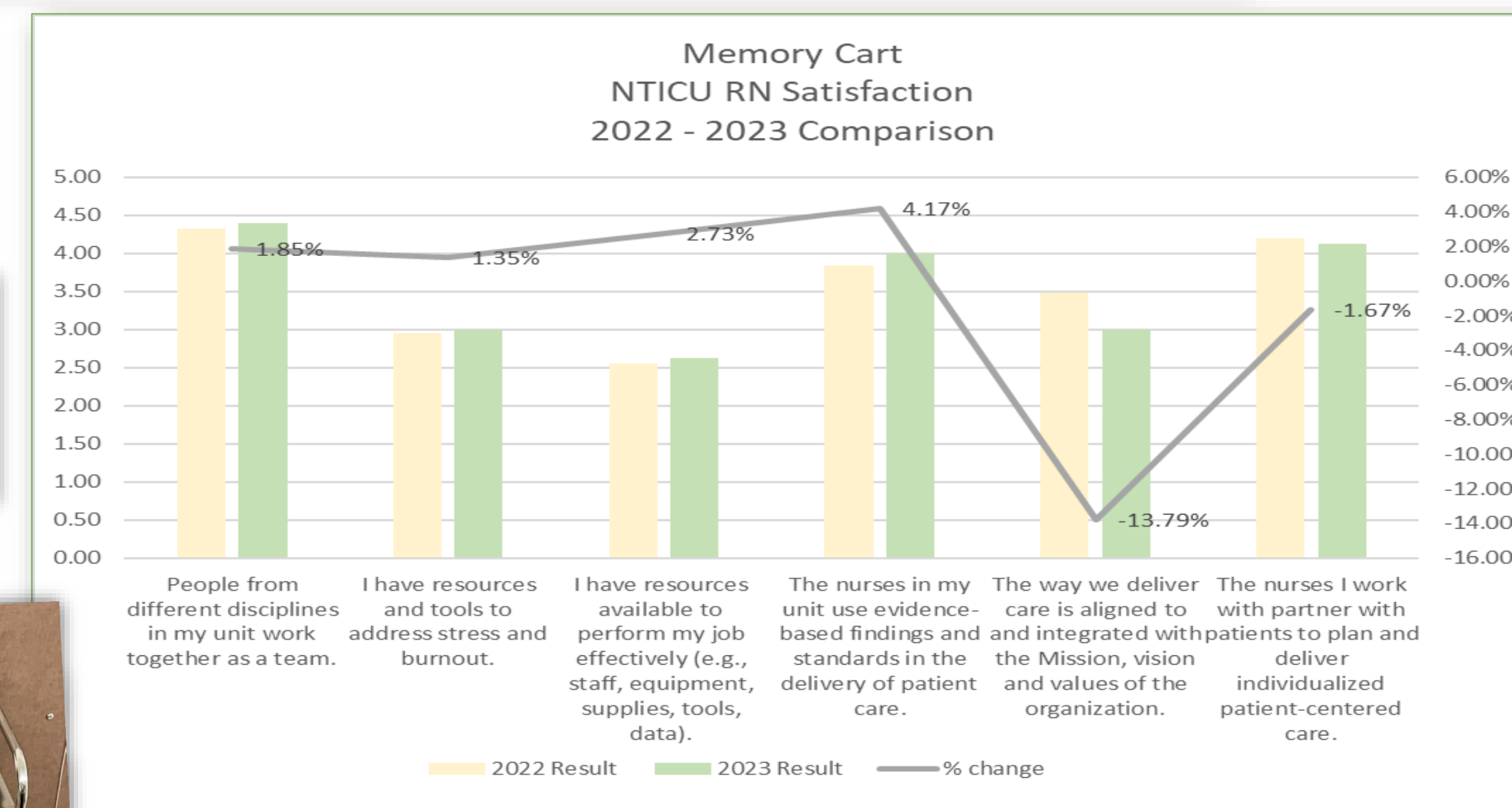
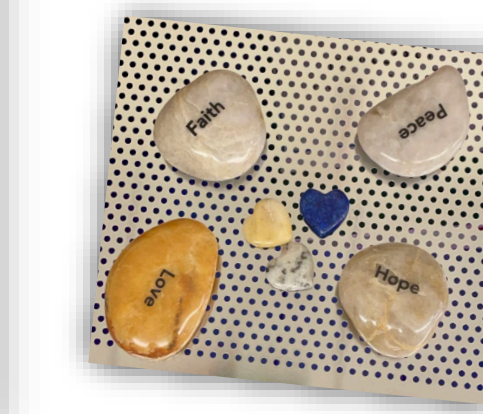
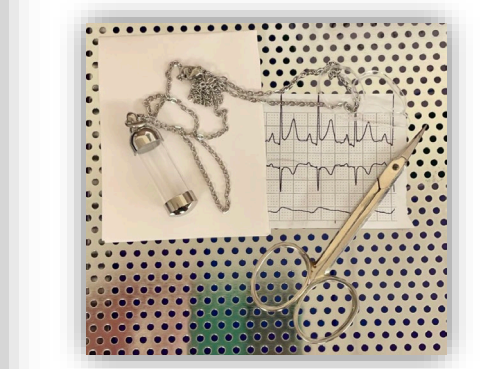
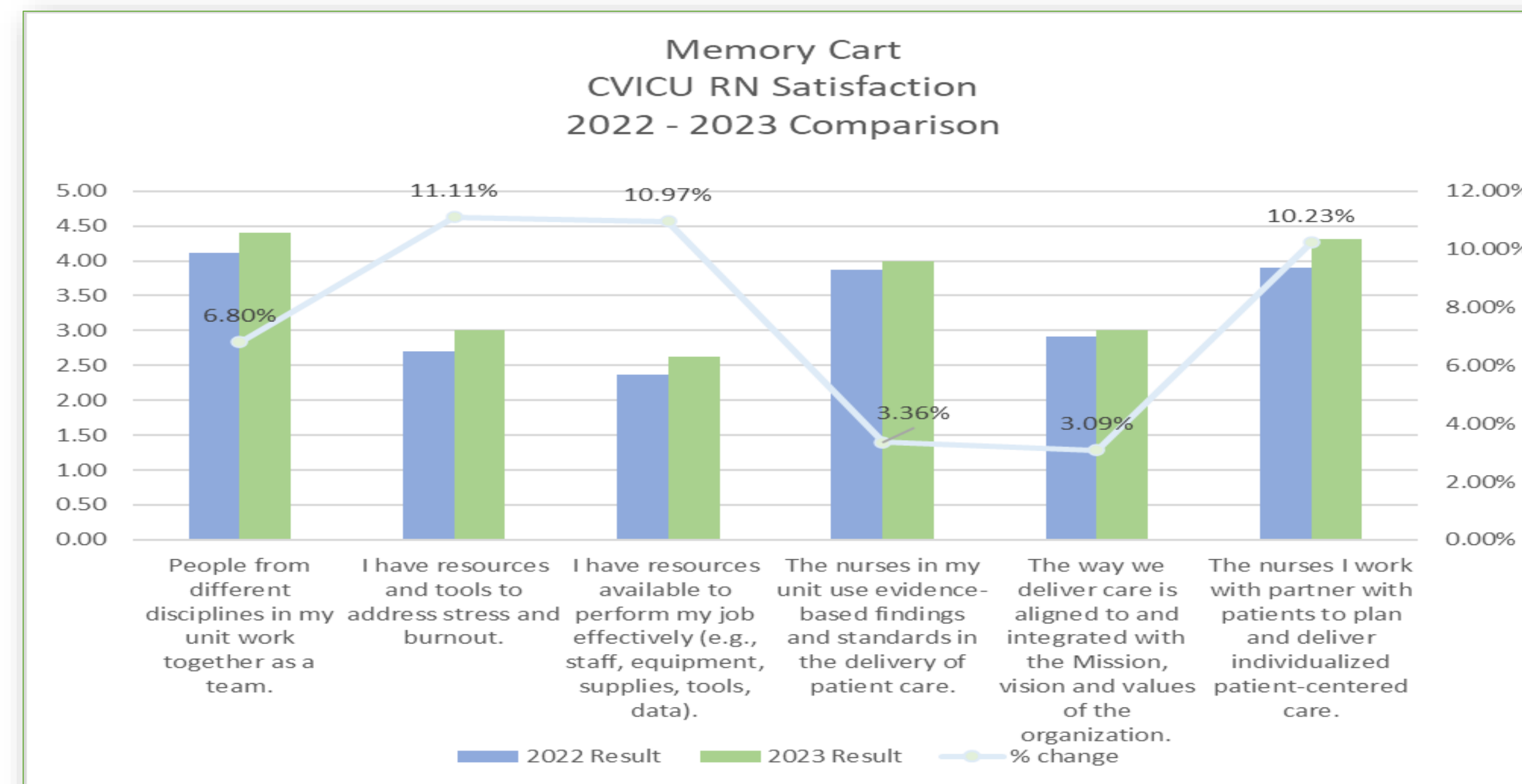
- Critical care nurses attend to the spiritual and psychological needs of patients and families while providing end-of-life (EOL) care in the ICU.
- External expectations and intrinsic obligatory duties include support of family rituals, memory-making and bonding activities, and emotionally supporting grieving family members.
- There is high risk of acute stress and moral injury for nurses caring for EOL patients
- Providing “meaningful care” in the form of memory-making activities in EOL situations helps critical care nurses with distress levels.

Purpose

The purpose of this QI project was to develop and determine if providing a memory cart to ICU nurses increased meaningful care activities.

Methods

- The Memory cart was created with Spiritual care.
- A check out sheet was provided for the CVICU and NTICU nurses.
- Nurses were asked “Did using the memory cart make your care feel more meaningful?”
- Stock levels, item usage, and checkout sheet completion in each ICU were measured between May – Dec. 2023.
- Chaplain support was provided.
- Nursing feedback was integrated and education was provided.



Results

- **Nurses in the CVICU used 674 items and the NTICU used 494 items;** however, only 30% and 21% of items, respectively were checked out.
- **92% of CVICU nurses** reported using the memory cart made their care feel more meaningful.
- **29% of NTICU RNs nurses** reported using the memory cart made their care feel more meaningful.
- **Multiple areas of increased ICU nurse satisfaction scores** across areas the Memory Cart might influence.
- **Multiple letters have been received from family members** expressing their gratitude for the items.

Discussion and Implications

- Location of the cart is very important.
- Nurses used many of the items in the memory cart; however, checkout rates were low.
- The Memory Cart may be a useful tool for Critical Care nurses working in the ICU with EOL patients.
- Future steps include measuring patient and family satisfaction with memory cart.

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