INTRODUCTION
The Cardiac Rehabilitation (CR) exercise prescription is established to guide each patient’s rehabilitation program. Two key components of the exercise prescription include the Target Heart Rate (THR) and expected Metabolic Equivalent of Task (MET) level at discharge. Patient engagement in following this exercise prescription is essential to ensure positive outcomes and prepare patients to return to independent exercise in the community.

Direct patient feedback and results from the Press Ganey patient satisfaction survey demonstrate there is an opportunity to improve patient understanding of the exercise prescription, specifically the THR and MET level goals.

PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to describe the effects of an Exercise Progression Chart on patient engagement in following their exercise prescription, specifically their THR and exercise intensity.

METHODS
Upon initiation of the CR program every patient was provided with an Exercise Progression Chart. This chart includes the THR and the MET level goal for each session of their Cardiac Rehabilitation program. Patients were expected to follow their individualized exercise prescription while they were participating in program. The therapy team monitored compliance with THR and MET level goals every 6 sessions. This information was used to evaluate how well the patient was following their exercise prescription. Feedback was provided to the patient. In addition, patients completed a post program survey focused on assessing preparedness to exercise independently in the community.

RESULTS
Post program survey results of 13 patients (intervention) were compared to a group of 12 patients (control) that completed program prior to the implementation of the Exercise Progression Chart. The survey was scored using a 5 point likert scale.

Questions:
1. I am satisfied with the information provided about my treatment and progress while in Cardiac Rehab?
2. I understood the exercise progression goals set during the Cardiac Rehab (Target Heart Rate & MET Level)?
3. I feel prepared to continue to exercise in the community?
4. I understand how to use my Target Heart Rate to monitor my heart rate?
5. I feel prepared to progress my exercise intensity independently?
6. I am satisfied the progress I made towards my Cardiac Rehabilitation goals?
7. I understand how to use my Target Heart Rate to monitor my heart rate?
8. I feel prepared to progress my exercise intensity independently?
9. I am satisfied the progress I made towards my Cardiac Rehabilitation goals?

A mean, mode, median number, as well as, standard deviation was produced for each survey question. The mode for all control and intervention questions was 5.00. The overall mean for control group was 4.38. The overall mean for the intervention group was 4.71. The overall standard deviation for the control group was 0.77. The overall standard deviation for the intervention group was 0.50.

CONCLUSIONS
The results suggest that patient engagement improved following the intervention of the Exercise Progression Chart. All survey questions demonstrated an increase on the likert scale in the intervention group, with a difference ranging from -0.04 to -0.52. These results show greater satisfaction and understanding of each individual’s exercise prescription, progression, and goals. Additionally, the average standard deviation was lowered in the intervention group which indicates a similar understanding of the addressed topics between individual patients in group setting. Anecdotal evidence was also recorded throughout the chart implementation. Overall feedback was positive. One repeated request was for larger and clearer print as many of CR participants had difficulty reading the small charts. The card size was chosen to fit in a telemetry pouch so as to be accessible during exercise. With future implementation larger and clearer print would be necessary. This evidence suggests that permanently implementing an Exercise Progression Chart into practice is feasible and will likely improve patient engagement in following their exercise prescription, specifically their THR and exercise intensity. Further research is necessary to determine if the use of an Exercise Progression Chart has an effect on patient outcomes after completing CR.

REFERENCES