Effective symptom management is a priority for patients with cancer because it contributes significantly to patients’ overall well-being and can be an indicator of successful patient- or caregiver-provider communication (D’Agostino et al., 2017; Tang et al., 2018). However, studies indicate that patients receive insufficient symptom support (Johnsen et al., 2013) and often feel left alone to manage their symptoms (Spichiger et al., 2012). With more patients being managed in the ambulatory setting, where they are expected to take on greater responsibility for monitoring and managing treatment- and disease-related symptoms, this gap may be further exacerbated. In a qualitative study of 28 patients with cancer, Coolbrandt et al. (2015) identified that the symptom experience in the home setting is very personal, and patients in this study reported that they felt best supported when healthcare providers were perceived to take an active interest in their symptom experience by offering advice and coaching. Identifying opportunities to maximize self-management through proactive symptom support may result in decreased symptom exacerbation and enhanced quality of life for patients, as well as fewer emergency department visits and hospital admissions, which can cause distress for the patient and family, strain hospital resources, and increase healthcare costs (McCorkle et al., 2011). According to the Institute of Medicine (2001), care should be based on continuous healing relationships using in-person and telehealth communication, and care should anticipate, rather than simply react to, patient needs.

Telephone triage interventions have been broadly described as a means for follow-up to monitor the status of patients in surgical, medical, and oncologic...