Aiming High for Complete Discharge Instructions
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Background Information: Day of Surgery Unit (DOSU) nurses identified vague or absent physician discharge instructions as a patient safety concern. Random sampling of 33 postoperative orders was collected over one week. The average number of patients per day is 40. Data illustrated post operative discharges were deficient in the following areas; diet 60%, activity 64%, dressing 24%, follow-up visit 24%, and medication reconciliation 48%.

Objective: To provide clear and complete physician discharge instructions to the outpatient population utilizing standardized orders.

Implementation: A user friendly generic physician outpatient order sheet was developed to address all areas of discharge.

Successful Practice: A repeat random sampling of 68 orders was collected eight months after implementation. Significant gains were made with increased compliance in diet by 82%, activity 82%; dressing 32%, follow up visit 32%, and medication reconciliation 100%.

Positive Outcomes: Patient safety areas were addressed and staff confidence improved in giving complete discharge instructions.

Implications: Complete discharge instructions given to the patient/family positively impacts patient safety, patient satisfaction, and knowledge in home care. This project will be followed by a research study.