CAN TECHNOLOGY ENHANCE PATIENT AND FAMILY CENTERED CARE?
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The Institute of Medicine published a groundbreaking report in 2001 that identified numerous failures in our health care systems. Many of these failures have been addressed in President Obama’s new healthcare bill. Among these is the lack of patient and family involvement in the process of health care decisions. Families should be viewed as partners in care. It is vital that we not restrict and limit their participation. Current visiting policies are often restrictive, put patients at risk, and contribute to emotional suffering for both the patient and family.

Evidence shows that the psychosocial needs of PACU patients and their families favor visitation. Both visitors and patients demonstrate reduced anxiety during the critical time in recovery.

Patient and Family Centered Care is our model of care. How do we meet the challenge of incorporating PFCC’s core concepts of dignity and respect, information sharing, participation and collaboration into our daily practice?

We were still a telephone based system wasting valuable time away from the bedside telephoning the waiting room. Technology became our friend. We worked with our IS team to install a patient tracking system in the waiting room. We also built into our electronic OR schedule a signal to let the desk know when the patient was ready to reunite with their family, our goal being to reunite the family and patient within thirty minutes of arrival to the PACU.

Using the technology that already exists we were able to meet our goals of involving families in the patient experience.