Purpose: Our Perianesthesia Care Unit (PACU) provides efficient, safe care to over 100 surgery patients a day. Length of stay in PACU is approximately two hours and is dependant on many factors such as type and length of surgery. As hospital census and patient acuity increased, it was noted that several patients remained in the PACU, even overnight, after anesthesia signed off from their care. A process was needed to identify and manage patients who remained in the PACU after anesthesia discharge.

Implementation: The PACU clinical nurse specialist, manager and clinical pharmacist met to discuss current state, identified concerns, and potential solutions. Plans were developed to initiate a formal rounding process on patients “boarding overnight”. Daily rounding by the clinical nurse specialist and pharmacist occurred at 0700 on patients. Night staff participate in rounding and provide information regarding successes and barriers in providing care. A checklist was developed to record information regarding the patients stay. During rounds, auditing of documentation occurs to assess accuracy and compliance. Management of medications was assessed.

Outcome: Collaboration of the clinical nurse specialist and clinical pharmacist in the PACU for rounding on patients has provided many process improvement implementations in patient management. A process was developed to streamline obtaining medications from pharmacy. Auditing of documentation offered opportunity to in-service staff on specific standards required on these unique patients. A system of identifying which physician to call regarding patient concerns was implemented. Safe quality care occurs through constant process review on daily rounds.