In 2008, our facility initiated a new medication bar code scanning system for all inpatient areas, including the PACU. Upon initiation of scanning, issues were identified by staff. RN buy in and frustration with the process, workflow, and unscannable medications were a few of the major problems. Our scanning rates in the beginning for medications were a dismal 13% and patient identification was 40%. There was little improvement over the first year for our department and the staff became very frustrated.

When the Department of Health Care Quality made scanning a metric for unit performance, the issues in PACU were escalated. Work groups were set up to discuss the issues with scanning medications and the process began for improvement. Once the RN’s saw that their issues were being addressed, their compliance in scanning increased. After a year of collaboration and persistence the scanning rates for the PACU have risen to 87% for medication scanning and 97% for patient identification. The department has met the metrics and is one of the leading units in scanning rates for the hospital.