A multidisciplinary team approach was implemented in the educational process for the care of the patient with Transversus Abdominis Plane (TAP) blocks. Coordinating pharmacy, surgeons, PACU, OR and Surgical floor staff to facilitate optimal care for the patient receiving TAP blocks was imperative to the success of our process.

TAP blocks are new type of pain management adjuvant used in place of an epidural and used to decrease opioid usage in the postoperative abdominal surgical patient (ex: Anterior spinal fusions, Total Abdominal Hysterectomy and various colon surgeries). This block can be done pre-operatively, intra-operatively and in PACU. Local anesthetic is injected into the TAP layer. Using continuous ultrasound guidance, a continuous catheter is placed. A pain ball is attached to the TAP catheter in PACU and infused over several days.

The key to this successful practice was formulating an action plan for an efficient method to disseminate the information about caring for the patients receiving TAP blocks. Educating the patient and family was done pre-operatively by the Anesthesiologist and Acute Pain Management RN team. We reinforced to the patient their role in achieving their pain management goals and improving their outcomes by better utilizing the various pain management adjuvants.

Educating the various staff members involved by a using a PowerPoint in-service and handouts with general information about TAP blocks was utilized. The handout was placed conveniently on the front of the chart and was instrumental in reaching all nursing staff members in the patient care departments.