MOVING FORWARD
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Background: Saint John’s is a small community hospital caring for an unhealthy population. Anderson is the number one healthcare spending capital of the nation. Providing care for obese patients is physically taxing on the staff and emotionally challenging to the patients. Economic conditions have also made restraint in labor dollars.

Objective: Providing safe and dignified care under tight economic conditions for obese patient population.

Implementation: Our team visited a bariatric facility and returned with recommendations of needed equipment. A survey of staff was done to assess difficulties and safety concerns that nursing had regarding care of obese patients. The survey proved need for education in the areas of body mechanics, safety, and continual compassionate care. Inservices were given incorporating scenarios of common ways people are discriminated against: promoting understanding of biases and encouraging looking at similarities not differences. Active listening was utilized to promote empathy and patient respect. Reviewing body mechanics and providing safe care throughout the Perioperative process was discussed. Assistive transfer devices and alternatives reviewed. Capital dollars submitted for devices.

Success Practice: Everyone who participated in the educational inservices had positive feedback and successfully completed the post test. Nursing is more aware of their unconscious judgments. Policy was developed for safe handling of obese patients.

Implications: Inservice motivated staff to find ways to provide a safe environment for patients and associates while encompassing an atmosphere of dignity. Equipment has been assessed and implemented by our facility.