FROM PICU TO PACU: A SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TO SUPPORT ACQUISITION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE AND STANDARDIZATION OF CARE

Team Leaders: Juleah Walsh, RN, MSN, CNS, CPN; Rachael Kaye, RN
Children’s Hospital of Orange County, Orange, California

Background:
Our children’s hospital recently separated from an adult facility and opened its own surgical services department. Experienced pediatric critical care nurses were recruited and hired to staff a Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). During training, we identified gaps in knowledge among these PICU nurses regarding: anesthetic agents, airway management, post-operative neurological care, and Phase I discharge criteria.

Objectives:
We sought to increase knowledge and comfort level with identified topics; provide hands-on experience with airway management techniques; promote a standardized approach to care regardless of nursing experience; and ensure compliance with ASPAN Standards.

Process:
After identifying staff needs, we developed a curriculum utilizing the ASPAN Competency Based Orientation and Credentialing Program for the Registered Nurse in the Perianesthesia Setting, and delivered a four hour mandatory class at three different times to accommodate different scheduling needs. Participants evaluated their pre- and post-class knowledge for each topic.

Statement of Successful Practice:
We educated 21 nurses over one week, which resulted in a statistically significant change in the nurse's (n = 12, 57% response rate) perception of their understanding of: Anesthesia Agents (p < .001); Management of Airway (p < .001); Neurologic Status (p = .018) and Discharge Criteria (p = .001).

Implications for Advancing Practice:
Pediatric PACU nursing is highly specialized. As a result, it is difficult to recruit experienced staff. We demonstrate that PICU nurses can be trained in the care of the PACU patient in a short period of time, which allows for increased utilization of nursing staff within a facility.