AN INPATIENT PACU SCHEDULING APPROACH FOR ADEQUATE STAFFING

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Background: Determining staffing for an inpatient Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) can be difficult to plan due to the variability of patient census and patient acuity on a day to day basis.

Objectives of the Project: The purpose of this project is to reevaluate how census and acuity data is used to schedule and improve the process of staffing in the PACU.

Process of Implementation: The process for this project included (1) establishing a scheduling council; (2) surveying PACU nurses regarding adequate staffing; (3) developing electronic medical record reports to gather patient census and acuity data; (4) gathering staffing budget data and Operating Room hold times; (5) creating a process for evaluating nursing needs to care for patients based on acuity through literature review; (6) using this key information to develop best practice guidelines and staffing tools.

Statement of the Successful Practice: A method to staff a PACU more efficiently and effectively was developed. Employing these guidelines and approaches for adequate staffing has improved staffing budget, productivity, and nursing satisfaction scores.

Implications for Practice: This practice provides guidelines to enable a PACU to follow ASPAN Standards and provide excellent nursing care for its patients. Data will continue to be monitored to evaluate effectiveness throughout the year.