

OVERNIGHT GUESTS IN THE PACU

Team Leader: Sharon Taylor, RN, BSN, CPAN
University of Michigan Health System, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Team Members: Nancy Strzyzewski, MSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA;
Toni Szpara, MSN(c), RN, CCRN, CPAN, CAPA

Background information: During times of hospital high occupancy, PACU is required to house patients overnight. PACU is not designed for or stocked for overnight guests. Once patients meet PACU discharge criteria and become inpatients, model of care and documentation follows inpatient pathways. PACU nurses are not experts in inpatient care and documentation. Overnight guests also stressed the staffing resources of PACU.

Objectives of project:

- Promote patient safety, efficiency, and customer satisfaction by following a defined action plan during high occupancy
- Communicate and implement plan with identified support services and staff

Process of implementation:

- Early morning hospital bed briefing happens daily and patient bed assignments made
- Patient Flow Coordinator of Admissions and Bed Coordination Center, House Manager and PACU Manager implement guidelines for high occupancy
- Central Staffing Resources arranges for RNs and clerks familiar with inpatient pathways to care for overnight patients
- Dietary delivers trays to patients in PACU
- Housekeeping and Materials Services bring supply cart stocked for inpatient needs
- Pharmacy notified to deliver meds to PACU
- Social work notified to meet patients in PACU
- Transporters called to deliver beds for patients

Statement of the successful practice:

- Patients receive appropriate level of care by experienced nurses
- Implementation of action plan has promoted notification of appropriate staff including necessary support services
- Customer satisfaction promoted by nursing staff and PACU management
- Patients receive appropriate level of care by experienced nurses

Implications for advancing the practice of perianesthesia nursing:

- Guidelines for use of PACU spaces during high occupancy promote safety, efficiency, and customer satisfaction.