THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTS VISITATION IN THE PACU: LET'S DO IT!

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The PACU implemented a practice change to allow and promote visitation. The Joint Commission and the American Nurse Credentialing Center encourage health care providers to be responsive to patient preferences, needs, and values. The 2012 edition of the ASPAN Standards supports visitation in PACU with Practice Recommendation 9.

Evidence-based support for visitation in PACU includes: increases nurses communication with family, decreases patients' reported pain, decreases family member anxiety, increases patient, family and nurse satisfaction and provides an opportunity for patient and family education.

When available, one adult visitor is invited to visit the patient in the PACU. Nurses determine patient conditions that preclude patient visitation. Visitation data is collected daily and posted weekly. Trends are noted and barriers are discussed at daily huddles.

 A PACU visitation literature search was shared with PACU and Pre-Op staff. Visitation guidelines and scripts were developed; all staff involved was educated/trained on the new processes. Visitor Passes and posters were printed and distributed. The visitation policy is discussed with individuals accompanying patients for support.

Implementing visitation in the PACU at OCMMC has been successful. In the first month of implementation, the rate of patient visitation went from essentially 0% to 95% for eligible outpatients and 78% for eligible inpatients. Barriers were identified to increase and sustain the rate of visitation to maintain a minimum goal of an 85% visitation rate for eligible patients.

Patient satisfaction follow-up survey results indicated that 100% of outpatients (sampled) were satisfied with their PACU experience.