IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ANESTHESIA TO PACU HANDOFF COMMUNICATION

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The patient handoff report is one of the most critical components in providing high quality care in the post anesthesia care unit (PACU). In 2009, the National Patient Safety Goal 2E was endorsed requiring all organizations to implement a standardized handoff process particularly during the recovery phase of patient care. A process improvement project was implemented at a National Cancer Institute designated cancer center to establish the process of passing real-time information related to patient's current physical condition, treatments, and any foreseen changes in status between the anesthesiology team PACU nurses. The goal was to develop an efficient standardized handoff tool to enhance communication regarding patient transition between the anesthesiology and recovery room nursing teams.

OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT:

To create and implement the Anesthesia Handoff Checklist and the PACU nurse Handoff documentation tool. To increase effective, patient-driven communication between Anesthesia and PACU Nursing teams during patient handoff.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

A pre-protocol data collection of "defective" handoffs was conducted with members of the Anesthesia Team and the PACU nurses regarding the effectiveness of the baseline process for patient handoff communication. Based on the protocols developed from the data collection, two tools were created to streamline the process to minimize contributing factors that were identified by staff members. Formal education was provided to and the new tools were implemented with these staff members. Data collection was repeated three weeks after implementation.

STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE:

Repeat data collection demonstrated that PACU nurses and Anesthesia providers noted the handoff Defect Rate decreased by 42.4%.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERI ANESTHESIA NURSING:

The development of the Handoff Checklist and the Handoff Communication tools demonstrated decreased dissatisfaction in communication reports between the two teams. Both the Handoff Checklist Tool and the Handoff Communication Tool may be helpful to remind and prevent loss of pertinent information.