

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CERTIFIED NURSES IN PACU

Team Leaders: Brenda Moore, BSN, RN, CAPA, Kim Sheffield, BSN, RN, CPAN
UF Health Shands, Gainesville, Florida

Team Members: Susan Harris, BSN, RN, CPAN, Lauren Kennedy, BSN, RN, CPAN, CCRN,
Colleen Anderson, BSN, RN, CPAN, Sarah Levy, BSN, RN, Gillian Louissant, BSN, RN,

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Current evidence shows that specialty nursing certification provides the following benefits:

- Promotes excellent patient care
- Improves patient safety and outcomes
- Increases nurse satisfaction
- Provides a sense of empowerment
- Increases level of competence
- Enhances interdisciplinary collaboration
- Demonstrates leadership

As a Magnet Hospital, we recognize that promoting professional development, such as increasing the number of certified nurses, is part of the Structural Empowerment component of Magnet hospitals. Our organization's FY15 goal is for 38% of eligible nurses to obtain certification in their specialty area. As of October 2013, the PACU department's number was a dismally low 14.8% certified nurses. We determined that an action plan was necessary to accomplish the goal.

OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT:

Recognizing the many benefits of increasing the number of certified nurses, our objective was to offer education, mentoring, and support to meet unit and hospital goals.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

A PACU Certification Pit Crew was organized to evaluate staff needs and develop an action plan to meet this goal. An action plan was implemented to educate staff of the benefits of certification. A Survey Monkey was utilized to assess learning needs. Barriers, such as a lack of study time, expense, and fear of failure were identified. Encouragement and recommendations were offered to overcome these barriers. The certification pit crew provided ongoing educational resources, study tools, and group practice exams. Posters were used within the department to share education, sign-up & testing dates, review courses, and ongoing measurement of goal achievements. Additionally, a "need to know" certification education was added to the unit's monthly newsletter.

STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE:

As of October 2014, the PACU certification rate is up to 36.9%. We anticipate reaching the hospital goal of 38% by the end of 2015.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING:

The Certification Pit Crew has been instrumental in increasing the number of certified nurses in the PACU. Providing peer level support, leadership, and mentoring were influential methods in obtaining this goal.