

## **RAPID RECOVERY IN PACU**

Team Leader: Shelly Kovach RN CPAN  
Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio

Team Members: Colleen Cummins BSN RN CEN, Cathy Prince BSN RN CPAN,  
Alisha Silagy BSN RN

**Background Information:** The Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) nurses began to see a change in the orders for certain orthopedic patients regarding ambulation in PACU. After a literature review, the PACU nurses found research supports the premise that physical therapy on the day of surgery improves patient outcomes. The PACU nurses identified an educational need for the nursing staff and the physical therapists on the practice change dictated by the Rapid Recovery (RR) in PACU order.

### **Objectives of Project:**

- Provide education identifying goals and benefits of RR to multidisciplinary team
- Ensure orthopedic surgery patients with physician orders for “Rapid Recovery in PACU” received physical therapy (PT) in the PACU when appropriate
- Improve communication and collaboration between PACU nurses and physical therapists
- 

**Process of Implementation:** A committee comprised of PACU nurses and physical therapists was formed. The committee identified learning needs of the nurses and therapists related to:

- goals and benefits of RR
- controlling pain of PACU patients
- physical therapist’s role and responsibilities

The committee identified there was a need to improve the channels of communication between PACU nurses and PT. Physical therapists’ educated nurses at PACU staff meetings on their role in the RR process. A communication tool was developed to identify patients who had an order for RR in PACU and a report was disseminated. Assistance from the Health Unit Coordinator (secretary) was enlisted. The team agreed upon a process to communicate patient readiness for Rapid Recovery. A protocol for Rapid Recovery in PACU was developed and initiated, and an algorithm was created.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** The success of this project relied heavily on multidisciplinary collaboration. Through the daily use of the new protocol and algorithm, the appropriate patients receive physical therapy in the PACU on a much more consistent basis. Rapid Recovery is an ongoing goal and is being monitored. Patient experience is improved by providing PT in the PACU when appropriate.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** This project is one example of a successful collaborative effort to improve patient experiences and contribute to positive patient outcomes.