

INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION TO THE SURGICAL SERVICES WAITING AREA

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Background Information: Patient satisfaction levels according to Press Ganey scores had decreased for the PACU. Several incidents in which service recovery was necessary occurred due to lack of communication or miscommunication to family members waiting in the surgical services waiting area. In addition, after 2:30pm the waiting area desk was often unattended which made it difficult for family members to get updates on their loved ones. This led to dissatisfaction among patients and their family members.

Objectives of Project: Improve communication to family members waiting in the surgical services waiting area. Allow family members to have a sense of control while waiting for their loved ones.

Process of Implementation: The PACU shared governance team brainstormed ideas for improving communication to the waiting area and for improving patient satisfaction. A waiting area poster was created which includes explanations for how the patient moves through surgical services, how to read the patient tracking board as the patient progresses through each unit, and a phone number to call to speak to a PACU nurse in the event that the desk is unattended. With the implementation of this poster, a survey was given to family members asking about the usefulness of the poster and for any additional comments regarding the waiting area. As a result of the survey, the patient tracking board was changed and made easier to read and a new instruction sheet on how to read the tracking board was created. Also, a staff member was placed at the waiting area desk so that the desk would be attended until 6:00pm.

Statement of Successful Practice: The results of the survey include: 96% of respondents stated they had read the poster and 88.5% stated the poster was helpful. As a result of the interventions, Press Ganey scores increased from 96.9% to 97.6% and are trending upwards.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Having surgery can be stressful for both patients and their family members. Finding innovative methods to improve communication between the PACU and waiting area is essential for relieving some of this stress for family members.