

## **Improvement of Discharge Education for Pediatric Outpatient Surgical Patients**

Team Leader: Lucinda Sapikowski BSN RN CCRN CPAN

CHOC Children's Hospital, Orange, California

Team Members: Juleah Walsh MSN RN PCNS-BC CPAN, Kate Bullock BSN RN CPN

**Background Information:** Postoperative education is an essential component of nursing care aimed at empowering patients and families to understand their condition, surgery, and recovery. Results of individual and meta-analytic studies support the importance of providing clear and specific post-operative education and its effectiveness in improving outcomes and reducing costs associated with post-operative complications and readmissions. Written discharge instructions provide a tangible resource that patient/families can use to improve comprehension and execution of post-operative care. As part of a nurse-led project, the perioperative services team at a free-standing children's hospital collaborated to evaluate and enhance patient discharge education through the standardization of handouts and written discharge instructions.

**Objectives of Project:** The goal of this project was to enhance patient/family satisfaction and facilitate safe transition home postoperatively by improving written discharge instructions through customization and standardization.

**Process of Implementation:** Using the plan, do, study, act problem-solving model, the PACU Clinical Practice Council (CPC) collaborated with procedural physicians to develop comprehensive education for commonly performed procedures. First, an assessment of existing vendor provided discharge instructions and gap analysis were completed. Next, a review of literature to identify best practices in patient/family education was compiled. Recognizing the importance of health literacy, the council partnered with the organizational Patient/Family Education committee to assure readability and comprehension. Lastly, the new discharge instructions were uploaded to the existing discharge software.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** Outcomes of these efforts include the creation of 90 custom written discharge instructions. Patient/family handouts are customized to specific physician and procedural needs. As a result, patients/families are now given appropriate, specific, and understandable instructions for care after procedures, providing a safe transfer to home. Collaboration with physicians is ongoing to create new instructions as gaps are identified.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** The stress of a child having a procedure combined with the need to comfort a fussy child post-operatively makes it challenging for families to understand and execute discharge instructions. Capacity to comprehend these instructions is critical to optimize recovery. Consistent instructions provided in an easy to understand format improves patient and family comprehension and compliance, improving outcomes.