

“Over 10,000 Served” – Covid Drive Thru

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Background Information: The Atlanta area, like the rest of the world, was paralyzed with fear and the unknown of Covid-19. Nothing like the Covid-19 pandemic had ever been seen or experienced in this lifetime. Schools, restaurants, businesses, etc., life as we know it closed with fear of catching or spreading Covid-19. Healthcare, including surgeries, were not immune and were frozen. This put not only the health of patients in jeopardy (as delay in care occurred and/or complications) but put the healthcare system in financial limbo.

Objective of Project:

- To find a way to get surgeries (in particular), but also healthcare back into operational status again.
- To find a way to create a safe environment for not only the patients but the staff. Ease the fear that is associated with spreading/catching Covid-19.

Process of Implementation: In May 2020, with little than two weeks notice, we created a workflow process for a “Drive Thru” Covid-19 test site for elective surgical patients. All patients having elective surgery would be required to undergo Covid-19 nasal swab testing to determine if they were Covid-19 negative/positive, prior to their surgeries. All positive patients’ cases were postponed- stopping Covid-19 from entering the Pre-OP, OR, and PACU areas. As time progressed and the drive thru showed it successes, we have expanded our service to over fifteen different service lines throughout our health system.

Statement of Successful Practice: The Covid 19 Drive Thru was almost an overnight success. Prior to its implementation, our surgeries at Kennestone were down over 30% during April 2020 (compared to April 2019). After six weeks of introducing the drive thru, surgeries were back up to normal volume (per 2019). Because of the success of surgeries being back in full operation, over thirteen other service lines (plus employees) began to come to the drive thru as well. As of Oct 2020, we have tested over 10,000 patients/employees in the Covid-19 drive thru.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Peri anesthesia Nursing: Perianesthesia nurses were the core team to identify, create, and execute the Covid 19 drive thru. It was the nurses, that hospital leadership, staff, and providers looked to, to help reopen surgeries (and be there for our patients’ needs). This experience has created more autonomy as well as respect from the other disciplinaries that are within our hospital. We are the frontline warriors!