Enriching Perioperative Communication Through Family Texting
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Background Information:
- Surgery produces anxiety for patients families or designated support person. COVID-19 exacerbated this with regulations limiting visitor presence in the perianesthesia area.
- The setting for this project was a 171-bed community hospital in the Northeast United States with FY21 surgical volume 11732. Recognizing the need for improved communication during surgery staff and leadership wanted to develop a tool that would improve family communication.
- Technological innovations were able to move forward more rapidly during the early stage of the pandemic and were effective solutions for communication challenges.

Objectives of Project: To implement enhanced communication through family texting to alleviate patient family and/or support person anxiety.

Process of Implementation: Following the leadership decision to initiate family texting in the Perianesthesia department a group of interdisciplinary staff were involved in the development of a new process of communication using text messaging. This process was standardized to align with the practices within the larger healthcare system.
- Collaborated with leadership and the informatics department to develop standardized messages for texts with time parameters for relaying information to families/support person
- Developed process for educating patients/support person about family texting followed by enrollment for those who were interested
- Developed process map and other educational resources to support staff
- Education provided to all staff throughout the perianesthesia department
- Developed process to receive feedback from staff patients families/support person which was then used to improve this new practice.

Statement of Successful Practice: Since August 2020 family texting has been successfully implemented with an enrollment rate of 85% or higher. There has been a decrease in phone calls from families/support person to the perianesthesia unit leading to increased unit efficiency and time for the nurse at the patient's bedside. Anecdotal feedback from patients and support person and patient satisfaction surveys has shown that concerns related to surgery has been reduced.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Family texting is an effective component of perianesthesia communication between clinical nurses and families/support persons. Perianesthesia nurses are essential drivers of development and implementation of innovative technologies to improve care for patients as well as their families and/or support person.