

The Journey Towards a Culture of Certification

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Background Information: A specialized Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) of Houston Methodist Hospital (HMH) had zero nurses who were specialty certified as perianesthesia nurses. Studies have found relationships between higher rates of nursing specialty certification and lower rates of total patient falls, pressure injuries, selected hospital-acquired infections, failure to rescue, and death. Interventions used were not only to encourage certification but provide study material and support while the PACU nurses prepared for the exam. Implementation of standardized processes have been found to adequately prepare staff to confidently provide the highest level of patient care, improve job satisfaction and contribute to retention.

Objectives of Project: The goal was to develop and implement a standardized process to assist the PACU nurse with preparing for the certification exam therefore creating certified nurses which will allow for increased staff satisfaction, improved retention and an improvement in patient outcomes.

Process of Implementation: A survey was taken of the PACU staff regarding their interest in certification. Staff reported that assistance with preparing for certification would be a motivator for increased retention. The Clinical Resource Nurse (CRN) created a study process based on the Certification Review for Perianesthesia Nursing. A study plan was created with each subject divided weekly. The PACU nurses interested in certification studied as a group, they were then able to continue to review on their own time. In between study sessions the CRN was available for questions. Ongoing communication ensured that the PACU nurses were fully supported during the 2 months of review. Ongoing communication kept the CRN up to date on the PACU nurses progress and afforded the opportunity to discuss and key concepts that the nurse was having difficulty with.

Statement of Successful Practice: The rate of Certified Perianesthesia Nurses (CPAN) in the PACU was 0%. Through the development of a thorough and systematic study program using key components from the ASPAN Certification Review Book, as well as other resources, the PACU certification rate was increased from 0% to 95%. 100% of staff surveyed post implementation stated that their certification increased their knowledge base, as well as prepared them to deliver the highest level of care to patients in the PACU.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Utilization of a standardized program for certification preparation in the PACU increases staff confidence, improves job satisfaction, and most importantly improves patient outcomes.