

Standardizing the Inpatient Pre-Op Process

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Background Information: Standardizing the process of Inpatient Pre-Op addresses patient safety concerns that arise from a lack of RN to RN report, multiple hand-offs in care, and delays in patient surgery. Previously there was no RN to RN verbal handoff, as the OR unit coordinator would call the Inpatient RN to bring the patient to Pre-Op. The lack of RN to RN verbal handoff resulted in incomplete transfer of care elements. No verbal handoff has the potential for patient errors, delays in surgery, and incomplete patient preparation prior to surgery.

Objectives of Project: The primary goal was to improve consistency with RN to RN verbal handoff for all Inpatients going to the OR. The integration of verbal handoff allows the Inpatient Pre-Op RN to effectively collaborate with the Acute Care RN on the patient's condition, and address concerns prior to surgery. The outcome of this quality improvement initiative was to improve patient readiness for surgery, prevent delays, and enhance the patient and family experience.

Process of Implementation: An Acute Care and Perioperative Services taskforce was established to develop a consistent practice for all patients going to the OR. Prior to standardizing the Inpatient Pre-Op process, internal auditing was performed in Pre-Op from May 2017 - February 2018 to identify concerns with patient readiness for surgery. The audit supported a need to create a new role for an assigned Inpatient Pre-Op RN. Staff participated in developing a standardized patient history questionnaire to obtain a thorough and complete handoff from the Inpatient RN. Obtaining a complete patient history prior to surgery decreases errors, increases unit efficiency, and standardizes the organizational process.

Statement of Successful Practice: The integration of verbal handoff between Pre-Op and Acute Care eliminated inconsistencies in practice, and improved patient readiness for surgery.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The results showed improvement in the implementation of how consistent RN to RN handoff helped to improve nurses' performance in terms of patient safety, continuity of care, and improving quality outcomes. To build on this success, Perioperative Services is taking steps to improve RN to RN handoff from the OR to the PACU. Overall, contributing to the organizational goal of becoming a high-reliability unit.