

Acute Care Nurse Practitioners in the PACU

Team Leaders: Martha Beene ACNP-BC, Arlis Jean Cihak ACNP-BC
Medstar Georgetown University Hospital (MGUH), Gaithersburg Maryland

Background Information: The Post-Procedural PACU of MGUH was opened in 2012. This unit was to be an extension of the PACU, built to take patients after IR and Catheterization Lab procedures. Because of the distance of the new unit from the main PACU, the need for in-house providers to manage emergent interventions, coordinate referrals and discharges, and prescribe urgent treatments or medications, became apparent.

Objectives of Project: In the absence of Anesthesia personnel, the ACNPs were to provide firsthand care for patients during the recovery period, coordinate care in preparation for discharge or transfer to inpatient units, act as patient and family advocates, and to serve as a resource for the nurses.

Process of Implementation: In MGUH's Post-Procedural PACU, two ACNPs were hired to act as the main providers and resources on the unit, in lieu of further extending Anesthesia coverage.

Statement of Successful Practice: The presence of ACNPs on the unit has contributed to higher efficiency in patient discharges, more timely responses to urgent and emergent situations, and increase in nurse satisfaction

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The use of Nurse Practitioners in the inpatient and outpatient setting has gained momentum in the healthcare field. The novel role of having NPs in the Perianesthesia setting can contribute to enhanced throughput, cost efficiency, increase in safety, and nurse satisfaction.