Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)
Family Visitation Update

Purpose: It is important for our units to strive to satisfy our patients and families. One way our unit did this was to begin allowing visitation for post-operative patients in the recovery period. In 2007, a detailed visitation policy was implemented. Staff responded with reluctance and inconsistencies. Staff felt that even though they wanted the option to visit their own family members in the PACU, that visitors should not be allowed in their own PACU due to privacy, staffing, and infection concerns.

Description: Our evidence based practice committee conducted in-services on family visitation and effective communication with family members. Policy was recently revised. Visitation begins every 45 minutes after the hour. Visitors are escorted to their room unless the nurse has called the waiting room and given a reason for not having a visit. The waiting room liaison escorts the visitors back to the waiting room after 5 minutes. Family can stay longer at the nurse’s discretion.

Outcomes: Visitation changes have been challenging, staff understand the importance of family visitation and have seen the positive effects. As evidence supports, we plan to continue to develop our visitation policy and standards.