DEFINING PATIENT CARE AFTER ANESTHESIA DISCHARGE

PURPOSE Patients are recovered and discharged by anesthesia providers in the recovery room after surgery. Due to floor staffing issues and bed availability, patients may be delayed from bed assignments and remain in the PACU environment. The PACU staff needed standards defined matching level of care for the Intensive Care Unit and Observation Unit Patients.

DESCRIPTION Standards were devised to ensure continuity of care appropriate to the post-operative division’s level of care. Areas emphasized were:
Frequency of Assessments, routine nursing care such as turning, nutrition, respiratory care, physician orders, EKG, and SaO2. When patients are discharged by the anesthesia provider, the care they receive is directed by the surgical service and issues are communicated to the team

OUTCOME Nurses became attuned to the changes in patient care that take place as patients wait for ICU and OU beds. There are clear guidelines for nurses to begin the ICU or OU phase at the time of anesthesia sign out. The patients are receiving the medications, diet, and other elements of care that are appropriate for them despite delays in transfer.