Title: Developing a Nurse-Driven Protocol for Urinary Catheter Utilization

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Background: Patients with urinary catheters are at risk for postoperative Urinary Tract Infections (UTI). At The Methodist Hospital (TMH), urinary catheter placement is highest in the Emergency Department and Operating Room (OR). Historically, perioperative urinary catheter placement has been physician-driven.

Objectives:
1) to decrease unnecessary use of urinary catheters
2) establish guidelines for the necessity and longevity of urinary catheters for perioperative patients
3) comply with the Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) measure of postoperative removal of urinary catheters

Successful Practice: A project was implemented to determine which perioperative patients require the use of urinary catheters. OR nurses were surveyed to assess their perceptions of appropriate urinary catheter placement. A nurse-driven protocol was developed through the use of evidenced-based research and focal point meetings with representatives of the surgical service lines. The protocol was implemented to guide the nurse in appropriate placement and removal of urinary catheters. Education of risks and hazards of urinary catheterization along with use of the protocol was initiated for the nursing staff.

Implications: Nurses are empowered to work with physicians to standardize urinary catheterization in the perioperative areas.