PATIENT/FAMILY VISITATION IN THE POST ANESTHESIA CARE UNIT (PACU)
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Historically, Postanesthesia Care Units (PACU) have been closed units. However, there is evidence in support of family visitation in the Phase I level of care showing benefits to both patients and families (from ASPAN’s position statement). The American Society of Perianesthesia Nurses Representative Assembly approved a position statement advocating family visitation in the PACU in 2003. However, family visitation in the PACU has been accepted with mixed feelings.

In 2006 the decision was made to allow family visitation in the Phase I PACU at MCG Health. The challenge was how to make family visitation work in this institution. Nurse resistance, small patient bays, the lack of privacy curtains, and way finding for the family members were issues that had to be addressed prior to instituting family visitation.

To overcome these barriers the PACU was remodeled to support family visitation by increasing the size of the bays and adding full surround cubicle curtains. The nurses were encouraged to discuss their feelings while at the same time understanding that family visitation was expected. Today family visitation in the PACU at MCG Health is an accepted practice. Families accompany the patient to the Holding area and then return to the PACU after surgery.