Preoperative Air Traffic Controller

**Purpose:** To provide one person expediting patients in timely manner to the preoperative setting.

**Description:** There is one surgical waiting area to three preoperative modules. There were three charge nurses monitoring flow, but no one person monitoring the big picture of preoperative flow. A nurse in surgical waiting area was assigned to verify patient orders for labs and other tasks. A rapid improvement event was performed done using lean methodology. The team realized there was room to improve efficiency on getting patients in Holding earlier to decrease late evening OR cancellations. Reorganization of the surgical waiting area nurse’s role was developed. Standard work was developed and consisted of a nurse acting like an “air traffic controller”. When patients are ready to go to holding, the nurse contacts the holding area charge nurse where the patient is being sent.

**Evaluation and Outcomes:** The surgical waiting area nurse assigned the patient a bay and sent them up thirty minutes to one hour sooner than the previous process of three charge nurses monitoring flow. Patients are getting to the preoperative area sooner. The nursing and anesthesia staff do not need to rush patients thru the preoperative process to have them ready timely.