MEETING THEM AT THE DOOR: ENSURING A SAFE SURGICAL EXPERIENCE FOR THE COMPLEX PEDIATRIC PATIENT BY DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE ROLE OF THE PRE-OP CLINIC RESOURCE NURSE

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
Our complex pediatric patients frequently arrive for surgery with an extensive list of comorbidities. The Anesthesia group for our facility has developed a list of patient conditions (“anesthesia alerts”) for which additional information/orders are required (such as medication weans, anticoagulant adjustments, seizure disorders, ketogenic diet management and apnea evaluation) pre-operatively to assure patient safety and coordinate therapies. Historically this list of anesthesia alerts was completed by a clinic nurse. Unfortunately, there were many gaps in the data collection and the incomplete alerts were frequently passed on to the pre-op nurses for follow up, often necessitating additional phone calls to families and potentially delaying crucial interventions.

OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT:
Our objective in the design and development of the Pre-Op Clinic Resource Nurse role was to efficiently address all anesthesia alerts, ensuring timely interventions pre-operatively and assuring patient safety, ultimately improving patient satisfaction.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:
An eight week pilot program was conducted, placing a pre-op nurse in the clinic to complete anesthesia alerts for all patients for whom surgery orders were completed. The pre-op nurse also had the opportunity to complete pre-op teaching during this visit and begin the process of care coordination.

STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE:
Upon completion of our pilot, multiple safety improvements were noted. No surgical orders arrived in the pre-op office with incomplete anesthesia alerts, compared to a 20% return prior to the pilot. Medication weans and lab orders were addressed with providers in person while reviewing the medical history. Patients with cardiac issues, MDROs, difficult airways, s/p organ transplantation, risk of malignant hyperthermia and hematological concerns were further evaluated, past medical records obtained and plans put in place for a safe surgical experience. Physicians and clinic nurses responded positively to the new role in terms of patient safety, patient satisfaction and workflow efficiency.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING:
Evaluation post the pilot program was overwhelmingly positive and the recommendation was made to create a permanent Pre-op Clinic Resource Nurse Position. This role is now a full time position ensuring the streamlined, efficient, safe preparation of our patients for surgery.