Background

- Timely placement of patients from the PACU has been a long standing concern
- Analysis of boarding times showed:
  - Variability and delays in the placement of patients
  - No standardized process or operational definitions
- Literature review revealed patient safety and overall length of stay negatively impacted by long boarding time in sending unit
- Lack of communication and teamwork between PACU, Transfer Center, and Inpatient Unit
- Process lacked transparency

Methods

- Lean Methodology (DMAIC – Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve Control) was utilized to identify barriers in the patient boarding process and generate solutions
- 3-day rapid improvement event with multi-disciplinary team of key stakeholders
- Prioritized top solutions:
  - Standardized operational definitions in Epic bed management
  - Informatics team automated pages using Epic Foundations
  - Created service level agreements for each step of process
  - Implemented “pull” system
  - Refining of the process through 3 PDSA cycles

Results

- Increased PACU capacity by over 1,100 hours
- $2.64 million in financial opportunity for PACU in potential billable charges
- 54.5% increase in employee satisfaction around communication between PACU and Inpatient Unit

Outcomes

- Decreased overall PACU boarding times by 5 minutes (statistically significant difference proven by Mann-Whitney test)
- Decreased standard deviation by 4 minutes (reduced variation)
- Standardized operational definitions
- Created clear roles and defined expectations with target goals for each process step (Transparency)
- Improved teamwork and communication between PACU, Transfer Center, and Inpatient Unit
- Inpatient nurse now empowered to “pull” their patient to the right level of care at the right time (shifted from a “push” system)

Implications

- Patient safety and satisfaction improved through reduced waiting
- Timely follow up of delayed patient placements
- Measurement of time data standardized
- Ongoing reevaluation and discussion of process
- Implement practice with all Inpatient Units receiving patients from the PACU

Co-Investigators

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