Utilizing a Regional Anesthesia Block Nurse Coordinator to Improve Quality Outcomes
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Clinical Setting
Department of Surgical Services in a Magnet® hospital, level II trauma center, where perioperative nurses are cross-trained:
- Pre-op
- PACU Phase I
- Phase II
- Regional anesthesia nerve blocks
- Ophthalmological same day surgeries

Clinical Issue
- Management of postoperative pain remains a high priority in a perioperative setting
- A heightened awareness of the opioid epidemic
- Utilization of multi-modal analgesia with a significant rise in the number of perioperative nerve block procedures being performed
- Lack of standardization in perioperative nerve block procedures process
- Increased number of non-surgical trauma patients needing regional nerve blocks for pain management
- Inefficiencies leading to increased costs
- Decreased patient satisfaction scores

Description of Team
Department of Surgical Services Leadership
- Chief Nursing Officer (CNO)
- Directors of Surgical Services, Nursing and Anesthesiology
- Perioperative Nurse Manager
- Perioperative Educator
- Clinical Perioperative Nurses
- Anesthesia Technician

Preparation and Planning
A process was needed to optimize throughput of patients presenting for regional anesthesia nerve blocks, pre-operatively, post-operatively, and non-surgical trauma.

S.W.O.T. Analysis was Conducted
- STRENGTHS – Patient volume and trained nurses
- WEAKNESS – Lack of standardization among providers and scheduling of patients
- OPPORTUNITY – Individual to coordinate the program
- THREATS – Physical space and staffing matrix

Proposal
Regional Anesthesia Block Nurse Coordinator
- 1 full-time RN designated to coordinate perioperative regional anesthesia nerve blocks
- 1 PRN anesthesia technician

Business Plan Developed
- Developed job description identifying the new proposed position with key job responsibilities
- Met with key stakeholders

Presented Data:
- First case on-time starts (FCOTS)
- Patient satisfaction
- Volume of regional blocks
- Return on investment (ROI) of 1 full-time RN

Coordinator Responsibilities
Develop a standardized process, in collaboration with the anesthesia team, to improve patient throughput in the Department of Surgical Services.
- Identify patients that may benefit from a regional nerve block anesthesia consultation
- Provide education to the patients, the families, and the clinical staff
- Collect data
- Assist the anesthesiologist with procedures
- Integrate Evidence-based practice (EBP) into daily practice
- Conduct research to develop best practices

Outcome
The outcomes of implementing a regional nerve block nurse coordinator have increased patient satisfaction, perioperative efficiency and productivity, and delays to operating room start times, especially FCOTS.

Implications for Perioperative Nursing
- With the addition of the Regional Anesthesia Block Nurse Coordinator, quality outcomes were improved in 3 out of 3 domains
- Standardized orientation for perioperative nurses in regional anesthesia procedures implemented
- Collaboration with the anesthesia team and OR team for culture of improvement
- Improved patient education and optimization for surgery to improve post-operative outcomes

References