

**THE PACU EXPERIENCE: USING PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION TO
DECREASE ANXIETY**

Team Leader: Jennifer Choura, MSN, RN, CPAN

UPMC Shadyside, Pittsburgh, PA

Team Member: Irene Vogel, BSN, RN, CCRN

Our PACU is 28 beds for adult and adolescent patients emerging from all forms of anesthesia used to facilitate the performance of surgery in all major specialties. Over the past 10 years the unit has progressed to include visitations. However, without clear visitation guidelines visitations were chaotic and inconsistent. This led us to develop visitation guidelines.

According to literature, successful transition of a visitation program requires education of staff, patients, and visitors on the program. With this in mind we created a survey to assess individual learning needs of all groups involved.

The PACU has always been a place of unknown. We were not surprised when results showed patients and families had little knowledge of PACU. This information drove us to develop a comprehensive educational program for both our patients and visitors on PACU process. This information is provided in pamphlet, booklet, and narrated PowerPoint preoperatively through physician offices, and our preoperative testing area. Teaming with Emmi, a computer based educational program, this information can also be viewed from computers in patient's homes. In our Surgical Lounge, a rolling 42" information screen directs visitors to computers to view information. Brochures are also available for reading.

After initiation of the education program, patients and visitors have reported feeling more at ease. Providing this educational experience has not only led to a successful visitation program but has helped decrease anxiety for both our patients and our visitors regarding the entire PACU process.