

**DEVELOPMENT OF CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES:  
CARE OF THE PATIENT FOLLOWING ANESTHESIA**

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The written standards of care for patients in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) in a Magnet® hospital were in need of amendment. Inconsistencies in practice among PACU RNs had also been noted. Therefore, an interdisciplinary team was formed consisting of the unit based educator, anesthesia providers, and clinical experts, to develop a more comprehensive standard of care for post anesthetic patients.

Current institutional written practice standards were reviewed. A literature search was completed with assistance from the library services staff. Current nursing literature, ASPAN Standards, and practice guidelines from the American Society of Anesthesiologists were incorporated and cited. In accordance to the institution's approval process, a review by key stakeholders and a senior risk manager was completed. The compiled clinical practice guidelines utilize a systems approach and include assessment, common complications, and practice recommendations.

Implementation plans include individual review of the guidelines by current staff, and use as an educational tool in the orientation of new PACU RNs. In order to provide a quick reference for care of their patients, nurses in the PACU will have access to the guidelines via the electronic documentation system. By standardizing practice, these comprehensive clinical practice guidelines will serve to promote quality and safety by providing evidence-based recommendations for general patient care and treatment interventions after general anesthesia, monitored anesthesia care, and regional anesthesia.