

OPERATING ROOM HOLDS: HOW ONE PACU WORKED COLLABORATIVELY TO REDUCE THIS PROBLEM

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When hospital census is at maximum capacity, it becomes challenging to keep efficient throughput through the Operating Room (OR) and Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). If the demand received from the operating room exceeds PACU capacity, operating room holds occur and subsequently cause delays in the daily operating schedule.

In order to maintain patient throughput and sustain operating room efficiency, a PACU in a Magnet® hospital utilized LEAN tools and continuous improvement methodologies to identify problems with patient flow. The team developed three strategies to help with this dilemma: (1) transfer eligible patients from Phase 1 recovery to an area that is geared toward patient-centered care to wait for a hospital bed, (2) utilize the Holding Room as an alternate Phase I recovery area, and (3) create standard work to match daily RN staffing to patient care volume. Identification of key stakeholders, as well as obtaining staff commitment and understanding were important to the solution to this problem. This was accomplished with the development of a daily metric huddle with the perianesthesia staff to review successes and develop solutions to overcome daily barriers.

Since implementation of these strategies, OR holds have been reduced by 75%. This successful practice enhances patient satisfaction by decreasing their wait times to enter the OR, as well as providing them with a ready bed in the PACU.