

IMPROVED PERIOPERATIVE FLOW THROUGH USE OF ELECTRONIC TRACKING

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PURPOSE: Our large perioperative department has recently experienced an increase in OR cases requiring improved utilization of bed space. It was necessary to maintain a minute to minute update of open beds to maximize efficiency and to avoid preoperative and postoperative delays.

IMPLEMENTATION: An electronic status board was developed to show the progress of all patients in the perioperative department. The board is on display in the post anesthesia care unit and the information refreshes automatically every two minutes. As patient status information is entered into our computer system it is displayed on the tracker board. The information can also be accessed remotely through the use of a program on a hand held tablet. The system has several color codes that can give the attending anesthesiologist and perioperative managers information needed to facilitate patient flow. It also measures time elapsed in each phase of the perioperative process. The tracker will show how long the patient has been in Phase I or how long a patient has been in boarder status. The information on the status board allows the nurse manager to identify patients who may need to be transferred to a different level of care.

EVALUATION: The electronic tracker has enabled our anesthesia staff to remotely view patient status and improve progress through the perioperative process. The information on the tracker board has also allowed the nurse managers to make timely staffing changes to reduce delays.