

REDUCING PACU LENGTH OF STAY

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Background:

- ▲ Our organization's strategic goal is to provide high quality, safe patient care at an affordable cost to the community.
- ▲ Changes in healthcare delivery have driven the hospital to examine current processes
- ▲ Baseline data indicated that PACU patient length of stay is longer than national benchmark
- ▲ It became the organization's priority initiative to improve patient flow efficiency at all levels with a targeted goal for PACU length of stay

Objective:

- ▲ Reduce PACU length of stay while maintaining patient safety and providing quality care

Process Implementation:

- ▲ Length of stay data collected
- ▲ Multidisciplinary (nurse managers, nurses, physicians, unit secretaries, bed assignment personnel) and multidepartmental meetings were conducted to explore internal and external barriers to timely PACU discharge and transfer.
- ▲ Findings of this Performance Improvement Committee were presented to PACU staff
- ▲ PACU-specific goals to meet the committee recommendations were identified
- ▲ Staff discussion led to development of strategies based on best practice and tactics to overcome identified barriers
- ▲ Staff were updated monthly of trending data including; a) PACU patient length of stay, b) anesthesia-related factors, c) hospital bed/room availability, d) nurse-related factors.

Statement of Successful Practice:

Through the implementation of a multidepartmental plan, PACU length of stay has been significantly reduced while maintaining high quality of care. Additional successes include increased patient and family satisfaction.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:

The postanesthesia nurse is empowered to effect change to individual, departmental, and organizational practice thereby directly impacting and lowering health care costs to our patients and community.