

## **IMPROVING COMMUNICATION THROUGH SURGICAL SERVICES HUDDLES**

Team Leader: Karen Mansfield, MSN, RN, CNOR

Virtua Marlton, Marlton, New Jersey

Team Members: Dee Buonacuore, BSN, RN; Daniel Carr, BSN, RN;  
Audrey Corcoran, BSN, RN, CNOR; Kelly Cucinotta, BSN, RN, VA-BC;  
Barbara Fernando, BSN, RN; Amy Glasofer, DrNP(c), RN, ONC

Ineffective communication is among the leading causes of patient harm and was implicated as a root cause of 60% of sentinel events in 2012 (The Joint Commission, 2012). Unit huddles have been endorsed as a tool to promote team work, communication, and patient safety (Institute for Healthcare Improvement, 2011). Huddles are brief meetings of key interdisciplinary personnel on a particular unit or team with a primarily operational focus (Dingley, Daugherty, Derleg & Persing, 2008).

The Surgical Services department at Virtua Marlton is made up of multiple perianesthesia and perioperative service units, rendering these units vulnerable to poor communication. Surprisingly, there is very little evidence to support the use of huddles in Surgical Services departments. The purpose of our project was to develop a Surgical Services huddle and evaluate its effectiveness on improving communication.

A group of key stakeholders developed the critical content to be communicated across Surgical Services. Based on this, a survey was designed to gather data on staff satisfaction with communication. Subsequently, a Surgical Services huddle was implemented, involving available staff and charge nurses from the perianesthesia and perioperative units and including content recommended by the huddle development team. The communication satisfaction survey was re-administered to staff three months after implementation, and revealed a staff perception of improved communication. This project has the potential to impact patient safety outcomes and patient satisfaction scores throughout the Surgical Services units and introduces a novel way to improve communication.