

**EXCELLENCE IN PACU PAIN MANAGEMENT:
HOW IS OUR PACU TEAM PERFORMING?**

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One of the most important goals in post anesthesia care is adequate pain management. Post Anesthesia Care Unit [PACU] pain management outcomes are not required measures for the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS). This project was designed to measure patients' perception of pain management effectiveness in the PACU.

In preparation for the study, pain management classes were provided for all staff. Pain Champions received additional education related to pain management. Order sets for pain management were reviewed by Anesthesia and improved where needed. Team members developed data collection methods and a form. Pain assessment documentation was reviewed for consistency and inter-rater reliability was tested.

Using the Numeric Rating Scale (NRS), a sample of 405 surgical inpatients were asked to state their pain goal (their desired maximum/tolerable pain level) prior to surgery. The pain goal was documented at the PACU beside on the data collection form and in the electronic medical record. Immediately prior to transfer from the PACU to the next level of care, patients stated their final PACU pain level. This pain level was documented again and compared to the preoperative pain goal. The data were reviewed and assessed for pain levels less than or equal to the stated pain goal.

The aggregated data during the data collection phase demonstrated that more than 97% of the PACU patients met their stated pain goal. Sampled review of pre-project and post-project medical records confirmed prior and continued pain goal attainment. These results validated the observation that PACU nurses at OCMMC apply pain management techniques consistently, with resulting patient satisfaction.