

PERIANESTHESIA / PERIOPERATIVE HANDOFF

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Staff members in the surgical services department felt that important information was missed or neglected when patients were transitioning to different units within the department. They felt this compromised the care and safety of the patients.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT:

The Shared Governance teams of the Surgical Processing Area (SPA) and the Operating Room (OR) decided to improve the communication along the continuum of care. In researching ways to avoid miscommunication and errors, it was discovered that the 2014 Hospital National Patient Safety Goals listed three goals specific to their challenge: Prevent mistakes in surgery, Improve Staff communication and identify patients correctly. These goals align with both the Mission and Values of the Virtua Health System, and the Relationship Based Care Model used by staff.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

A pre-printed paper handoff tool was developed by the SPA and OR nurses to use as a guide for verbal communication between staff before transporting patients. It includes necessary elements from the chart, patient identifiers, and SCIP measures. The SPA and OR nurses, along with the CRNA, meet in the patient's room and discuss the tool, plan of care and any issues with the patient and family members before the patient is transported to the OR.

STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE:

The communication tool has undergone several revisions by engaged staff members to consolidate items and has been well received by the SPA, OR and Anesthesia. Team members are now observed searching for their colleagues to begin the handoff process. They believe that the increased communication allows for safer care of the patients and has decreased the chance of errors. Patients and family members have mentioned the process both anecdotally and in patient satisfaction surveys. Patients feel empowered and an active part of the health care team.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING:

The PACU and OR are now working on a handoff tool because of the first success. The tools allow the perianesthesia nurse to deliver safe and effective care and truly be the patient's advocate throughout the perianesthesia and perioperative experience.