

CAUSE AND EFFECT OF PATIENT'S DELAYED DISCHARGE FROM PACU IN RELATION TO CUSTOMER SAFETY AND SATISFACTION

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

D3-PACU is one of several Post Anesthesia Care Unit in Houston Methodist Hospital, servicing 40-60 post-operative and/or post procedural patients per week day from the simplest to the most complex of surgical procedure. Normal recovery time for patient in D3-PACU is 1-2 hours; average is 1-3 hours. Patient is transferred to other nursing units after discharge criteria is met. Currently, patient's turn over takes longer related to various reasons but mainly bed unavailability. We are facing long waits for inpatient beds.

OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT:

To implement a process improvement project, find solutions to help improve patient condition and reduce discharge delays in D3-PACU thus; enhance patient safety and customer satisfaction.

PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

D3-PACU REBP Council members helped pinpoint problem areas by gathering daily data that includes patient name, type of surgery, surgeon's name, pre and post op location, patient discharge time, LOS in PACU, reasons for delay discharges and follow up comments from other nursing units, staff, patient and family members. Results communicated via emails and meetings with nursing staff, manager and directors. Participation of every one; including bed coordinators, secretaries, transport services and housekeeping were encouraged.

STATEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE:

The result of this project shows; increase in volume of patients corresponds to increase in transfer delays related to increase demands for rooms and vice versa. These prompted the management to improve communication/coordination and implement changes in D3-PACU. These changes helped increased patient safety and customer satisfaction; noted thru patient and family input during post op visits, post op calls, letters and as evident in Nursing Scorecards and Nursing Dashboard.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF PERIANESTHESIA NURSING:

D3-PACU delay discharges has a big impact on "customer satisfaction" it causes a chain reaction, back log of patient in OR and preoperative area; it affects staffing, patient condition/safety and budget. Though we cannot totally solve this problem, we can all work together in achieving a positive outcome; providing our customers the best possible patient care experience.