

WAKE WINGS: FROM THE SKY TO THE BEDSIDE

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Background Information: In 2011, the Surgical Services department at Wake Forest Baptist Health identified patient safety as a top priority for the department as a whole. The facility lacked a standardized form of communication and staff did not feel empowered to voice patient safety concerns. In response, the Wake Wings initiative was developed, based on Life Wings, a program used in the airline industry. Life Wings was created by pilots and is based primarily on communication and teamwork principles used to create a safe environment.

Objectives of Project: The purpose of Wake Wings is to create a culture of open communication among team members. It provides a framework for an approach to operative procedures that is standardized, thorough and routine, with the ultimate goal of promoting an optimally safe environment. This framework includes the implementation of standardized checklists and handoff communication forms.

Process of Implementation: The Wake Wings Steering Committee was created to devise and oversee the implementation of the program. This committee maintains consistency of the patient safety tools and evaluates the evolving needs of the Wake Wings program. The implementation of this patient safety transformation included a mandatory teamwork skills workshop and a patient safety tool workshop. The patient safety tools consist of standardized handoff communication forms, pre-procedural checklists, and concern reports. An escalation algorithm was also developed to provide a pathway for team members to voice safety concerns without fear of retaliation. Grand Rounds and read files provide updates and ongoing education to all staff members.

Statement of Successful Practice: Since the implementation of Wake Wings, communication among team members has improved dramatically as evidenced by positive feedback from staff on follow-up surveys. Patient safety has also been enhanced through decreased incidence of errors. The success of Wake Wings in Surgical Services supports our mission that every patient reliably receives patient-centered, safe and compassionate care of the highest quality.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The positive outcomes derived from our Wake Wings program support the vital role that perianesthesia nurses play in the creation of a safe environment for surgical patients. Nurses at Wake Forest Baptist Health now give and receive consistent, thorough patient handoffs and are empowered to voice concerns regarding patient safety.