

STREAMLINING THE OUTPATIENT RECOVERY PROCESS

Team Leader: Elizabeth L'Hommedieu BSN RN CPAN

Barnes Jewish Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri

Team Members: Gail Davis PhD(r) APRN BC CCRN, Colleen M. Becker PhD(c) RN CCRN,
Sandra Filla MSN RN AGCNS-BC

Background Information: We have had a significant increase in outpatient surgeries. Outpatients were cared for in two separate areas and the transition process caused delays. These extra steps led in an increased length of stay and also increased risk for patient safety events by adding one more nurse to nurse handoff.

Objectives of Project: The fast track process was initiated to decrease lengths of stay. Patient satisfaction and patient safety were also targeted for improvement by reducing the number of RN handoffs.

Process of Implementation: I was interested in streamlining our outpatient recovery process to facilitate better flow. The White Fast Track Scale was published in the April 2015 issue of "The Journal of Postanesthesia Nursing". Phase I nurses could use this scale to fast track our General Anesthesia outpatients from Phase I to Phase II prior to medical evaluation. Part one was to develop a fast track program for Phase I outpatients. Part two was to initiate a change in our process so that a large portion of our general anesthesia outpatients went directly from the OR to our outpatient Recovery Area. Our Phase II nurses had previously received Critical Care education and a complete Phase I orientation but were currently not caring for Phase I patients. An education and communication plan was developed which included the Phase I and Phase II RNs and the anesthesia staff. Refresher courses were provided to our Phase II RNs by the PACU educators, topics included airway management, circulation competency and Phase I safety measures. Roving inservices were provided to all the Phase I RNs regarding the change in process and institution of the White Fast Track Scale. After the education was complete, a start date was set. General anesthesia outpatients went directly to our outpatient Recovery.

Statement of Successful Practice: The change in our outpatient recovery process allowed for greater continuity of care, earlier family involvement and more efficient flow.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Outpatient Recovery Process expanded the skill set of our Phase II nurses and gave more autonomy to our Phase I nurses by developing the Fast Track Process. The change in process led to shorter stays and higher patient satisfaction.