



Initiative to Improve Communication to the Surgical Services Waiting Area

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Purpose

The purpose of this project was to improve communication to family members waiting in the surgical services waiting area and to allow family members to have a sense of control while waiting for their loved ones.

Introduction

Having surgery can be emotionally challenging for both patients and their family members. Finding innovative methods to improve communication between the PACU and waiting area is essential for relieving some of their stress. Families, lacking the ability to obtain information regarding the progress of their loved ones, resulted in frustration and anxiety. This manifested in many complaints and an overall decrease in Press Ganey patient satisfaction scores. These family complaints, especially during off hours, and the decrease in patient satisfaction scores were the motivation for this project.



Clinical Problem

- ❖ Lack of effective communication to family members in surgical waiting room regarding patient progress.
- ❖ Families experiencing frustration and anxiety due to their inability to obtain timely patient updates.
- ❖ Communication was particularly problematic during off hours when the information desk was unattended.

Methods

- ❖ The PACU Shared Governance team brainstormed ideas for improving communication to the waiting room and for improving patient satisfaction.
- ❖ A waiting room poster was created describing:
 - ❖ patient movement through surgical services
 - ❖ explanation of the patient tracking board
 - ❖ steps to take if the waiting room desk is unattended.
- ❖ With the implementation of the poster, a survey was given to family members regarding usefulness of the poster and additional suggestions.
- ❖ Suggestions were reviewed with subsequent changes implemented.

Waiting Room Poster

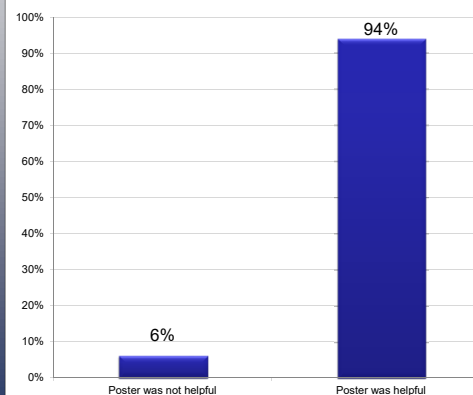
Results

As a result of the survey, the patient tracking board was changed and made easier to read. A new instruction sheet on how to read the tracking board was created. Also, a staff member was placed at the waiting area desk so that the desk would be attended until 6:00pm.

The results of the survey include: 96% of respondents stated they had read the poster and, of these, 94% stated the poster was helpful. As a result of the interventions, Press Ganey scores related to information given to family, information on the day of surgery, and information about delays increased from 96.9% to 97.6% and are trending upwards.

Waiting Room Poster Survey

Waiting Room Poster Survey Results



Conclusions

The PACU Shared Governance Committee developed an informational poster to be utilized in the surgical waiting room to provide family members with information regarding their loved one's surgical journey. This poster, which included the PACU phone number, gave family members the ability to speak directly with a PACU nurse to obtain timely patient updates. After giving families this control, we saw decreased anxiety and increased patient and family satisfaction as evidenced by positive family feedback and increased Press Ganey scores.

Waiting Room Tracker Board Instructions

Bibliography

1. AHC Media (2015). Waiting room card reduces family anxiety. *Hospital Peer Review*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ahcmedia.com/articles/136455-info-card-for-surgery-waiting-room-improves-satisfaction>
2. Windle, P. (2016). Nurse's perceptions of family visitations in the adult post-anesthesia care unit. *Journal of Nursing Practice Applications & Review of Research*, 6(1), 32-39.