

INCREASING PATIENT SATISFACTION BY DECREASING WAITING ROOM TIMES

Team Leader: Kelley Kelly MSN RN CAPA VA-BC
Riley Outpatient Surgery Center, Indianapolis, Indiana
Team Member: Penny Ebert BSN RN CPN

Background Information: Several research studies have linked the time patients must spend in the waiting room to patient dissatisfaction. This became a concern at an intercity pediatric outpatient surgery center after reviewing surveys and listening to patient/ family comments. In the initial review of waiting room times, this surgery center had 40% of their patients waiting over ten minutes after they were registered for surgery.

Objectives of Project: The objective of this project was to increase patient satisfaction by reducing the amount of time spent in the waiting room after registration. The longest waiting room times occurred during staff meal breaks, minimal staffing days, and when assessment rooms were already occupied.

Process of Implementation: After reviewing the process, several interventions were implemented with leadership approval. Charge nurses were instructed to schedule meal breaks that would leave more staff on the unit. Charge nurses were notified when a patient was registered so they could assist by bringing the patient to an assessment room. Nursing staff and housekeeping worked together to prepare the room as soon as it became available.

Statement of Successful Practice: Each month a run report was generated from the EMR. There was a consistent downward trend of waiting room times. In 2015 40% of the patients had to wait over ten minutes. In 2016, the waiting room times decreased to 14% of the patients waiting longer than ten minutes. So far, in 2017 waiting room times have decreased to 8% of patients waiting over ten minutes.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Patients and their families are frequently dissatisfied by the amount of time they are required to wait in the perianesthesia environment. By collecting data and demonstrating a need for change, the staff were able to work as a team to improve their process at this Outpatient Surgery Center.