

## **OPTIMIZING THE POST-OPERATIVE EXPERIENCE FOR MISMANAGED CHRONIC PAIN PATIENTS BY INITIATING PAIN CONSULTATIONS PREOPERATIVELY**

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**Background Information:** Chronic pain patients are often mismanaged regarding post-operative pain. They are often under-treated and overlooked because their home regimens are put on hold or not continued once admitted. Pain consultations are usually only requested when patients are writhing in pain on the floor, when it is often too late. When pain specialists were notified of the consult, it would often be after patients have been discharged. These opioid tolerant patients saw a longer length of stay in PACU due to difficulty managing their pain post-operatively. Difficulty would arise from balancing medicating for pain on high levels of sedation with little change to their high levels of pain.

### **Objectives of Project:**

- Creation and implementation of an assessment tool found in EMR regarding patient's pain history
- Identify vulnerable population of surgical chronic pain patients preoperatively in Outpatient Testing utilizing the chronic pain assessment tool
- Expediting pain management consults by having Outpatient Testing requesting for pain consultations
- Notifying pain management ahead of time with the patient's surgery date and time
- Initiating the pain management consultation in pre-op by having the pain doctors begin their consultations before surgery.

**Process of Implementation:** The process began with one nurse initiating this work flow, but after conducting meetings with anesthesia, leadership, the project expanded to a team approach of Outpatient Testing calling surgeons for consultations. Pain management is then introduced in the preoperative environment, leading to an increased awareness of the of in-patient pain management physicians.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** Since going live in February 2017, there have been twenty preoperative pain management consults for 100 chronic pain patients that were identified. Pain quality scores for PACU increased from 69% to 95%. Physicians report seeing an impact involving pain management preoperatively. This helps to decrease pain control issues post-operatively as well as easing the patient's anxiety knowing a specialist will help to manage their pain during their hospitalization.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** Continuing this process will help to improve communication and build a foundation for continued ways to best serve this population.