

## **A GRASSROOTS INITIATIVE THAT SUCCESSFULLY STRENGTHENED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND ENGAGEMENT IN A POST ANESTHESIA CARE UNIT**

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**Background information:** In 2015 the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU) participated in an Employee Engagement Survey. Results, shared by the manager at staff meetings, indicated 29% of staff were engaged, 57% content, and 14% ambivalent; zero of seven ANCC-approved categories for nurse satisfaction outperformed the national mean benchmark. A clinical RN identified the opportunity to partner with the manager to lead development and implementation of an action plan to improve engagement.

### **Objectives of Project:**

1. Improve employee engagement scores and RN satisfaction with the practice environment.
2. Increase staff engagement through intentional and consistent leadership feedback, improved team communication, and peer to peer and leadership recognition initiatives.

**Process of Implementation:** Clinical nurse proposed, and manager approved, engagement improvement to be the focus for the nurse's required project for career advancement. Process began with identifying improvement opportunities based on survey scores and comments. Reviewed survey with staff colleagues and held focus groups to drill down and identify areas for improvement. Based on staff feedback, formulated initiatives for three key areas: leadership feedback, team communication, and rewards and recognition. Proposed initiatives to manager, unit council, and RBC team, who approved the plan. Clinical RN and NM, and unit council/team leaders collaboratively implemented initiatives. Performed status check mid-process in form of questionnaire and at staff meetings; team was satisfied with changes implemented and indicated improvement in practice environment.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** The 2016 Employee Engagement Survey indicated that PACU was a Tier 1 unit (only 18% hospital departments scored at this top level). PACU's engagement score was 4.50 on a scale of 1-5, which outperformed the organizational score. Manager and employee domain scores also outperformed the organizational average. Seven of seven ANCC-approved categories for RN satisfaction outperformed the national average, an improvement from zero in 2015.

**Indications for Advancing the Practice of Paranesthesia Nursing:** Successful improvement of employee engagement and satisfaction can be achieved by supporting clinical nurses to be project leaders and providing formal and informal processes for staff involvement in improving the practice environment. Key areas impacting staff satisfaction are effectiveness of unit communication, intentional leadership feedback, and peer to peer recognition.