

## **IMPROVING PATIENT FLOW**

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**Background Information:** A problem known to many recovery rooms is extended holding times due to unavailability of beds or nurses on inpatient units. At the beginning of our project, the average wait time from when the patient was ready to transfer until leaving the PACU was 2 hours and 26 minutes. The institution's goal was 60 minutes or less.

**Objectives of Project:** The objectives of this project were to analyze the reasons for the lengthy process for transferring a patient and decrease wait times for patients to get their destination.

**Process of Implementation:** Using LEAN methodology, the transfer process was examined. Each step of the transfer process was mapped out and timed through audits. Buy in of stakeholders throughout the hospital helped the change process. Thirty day, 60 day, and 90 day meetings were held to discuss findings of audits and work together to find solutions. Through audits and analysis target conditions for each phase of the transfer process were established. The goals were set that a bed would be assigned within 20 minutes of determining readiness to transfer, the receiving nurse should call within 20 minutes, and the transportation of the patient should occur within 20 minutes.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** Through this process the reasons for delays in transfer were multifactorial. Reasons included lack of receiving nurses, rooms, delays in communication of assignment, delays in bed assignment, change of shift delays, and lack of following current processes. Not all causes for delays could be improved, however, through the stakeholder's commitment to improving the transfer process, standard work was instituted for all stakeholders. Re-commitment to the current policy of calling report within 20 minutes of bed assignment was emphasized and an agreement that quarterly auditing should take place to guarantee adherence to the standard work. Through these interventions transfer times decreased to 1 hour and 6 minutes.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** Using agents of change and LEAN methodology PACU'S can make a positive influence on transfers. Changes that occurred were implemented hospital wide to all procedural and feeder units. This in turn improved employee and patient satisfaction.