

Mobilizing PACU Nurses to Provide Critical Care during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Team Leader: Rebecca Vincent BSN-RN CPAN

University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, New York

Team Members: M. Trevor Bennett MBA MSN RN CNOR,

William Ford BSN RN CCRN TCRN SCRNI, E. Kate Valcin DNP RN NEA-BC CCRN-K CNL

Background Information: In March 2020, a New York State mandate required our institution place a moratorium on elective surgery for an unknown period of time to ensure adequate Covid-19 surge hospital bed availability. This resulted in extremely low patient volumes for perioperative services. Conversely, critical care was experiencing an influx of patient volume and acuity, necessitating additional nursing support.

Objectives of Project: Our aim was to bolster the hospital's critical care service line by pooling available nursing resources. The perioperative and critical care leadership teams further identified this initiative as an opportunity to strengthen relationships between nurses that share a common skill set.

Process of Implementation: Hospital command center meetings to address surge bed capacity reinforced the partnership between perioperative and critical care services. Team nursing models were reviewed collaboratively. The PACU nurse manager requested volunteers to staff critical care based on a team model. Five highly experienced PACU RNs and five newer PACU RNs without prior ICU assignments volunteered, with goals to expand knowledge, improve critical assessment skills, and help a service in need. The ten PACU nurse volunteers were assigned into five pairs, consisting of one experienced RN and one newer RN. The five teams of two were consistently matched with their partner, and worked every shift in the ICU as a pair.

Statement of Successful Practice: This collaborative effort between the perioperative and critical care nursing services achieved the goal of providing safe and competent care to a population in dire need during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. This initiative also strengthened relationships between the services, thereby promoting improved communication and increased efficiency.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The future implications of Covid-19 are largely unknown, and this initiative mobilized nursing resources in a systematic fashion to provide necessary specialized care. A framework was established that could be easily replicated, thereby strengthening our ability to collaboratively approach emergency preparedness moving forward.