Answering the Call
Team Leaders: Gifty Boateng MSN RN CPAN, Kim Campbell MSN RN CAPA,
Lauren Durk BSN RN, Kathleen Steindl BS RN CAPA, Kaitlyn Bang MSN RN TNCC
Bayhealth Medical Center, Milford, Delaware

Background Information: Bayhealth Medical Center in Delaware employs more than 4,400 staff. As the Covid-19 pandemic approached, the task was to successfully shift staff to care for the upcoming critically ill Covid-19 patients. Our small community hospitals had to respond with a plan that provided safe care of patients and a redeployment plan for staff that ensured safety and protection. The leadership team evaluated our resources and devised a plan for appropriately educating and placing staff in the areas best suited to their background and skills.

Objectives of Project:
- Assess staffing resources available
- Educate staff for caring for Covid-19 patients
- Devise a redeployment plan for physicians, nurses, and nursing assistants
- Prepare surgical areas for Covid-19 care units
- Optimize care for Covid-19 patients by providing more front line staff

Process of Implementation: Our leadership team determined that elective surgeries would likely be put on hold for an indefinite period of time. The perioperative department became a resource pool to assist and support the critical care areas as well as shift to an overflow area of care for Covid-19 patients. The staff were personally evaluated for their work history, knowledge and skills. Many Periop nurses and APRNs had recent critical care experience. They were placed in the critical care units and emergency departments. Some nurses were best suited for acuity adaptable care. Others became part of the Covid-19 management team that provided direction for staff exposures and quarantine protocols. Anesthesiologists were redeployed as ICU Intensivist. Educators were posted off site to test community members for Covid-19. Non Covid-19 patients had to be cared for in a protected environment as well. The whole work environment had to be repurposed. Redeployment occurred from April to June of 2020.

Statement of Successful Practice: Redeployment of the majority of perioperative staff during the Covid-19 pandemic provided ten to thirty percent additional staff for the frontline care of Covid-19 patients. This support minimized nursing stress and allowed for optimized care. Keeping staff informed and involving staff with planning were essential for success. Redeployed staff currently reflect back with pride while answering this unprecedented call of duty.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: As health care facilities adapt to face future challenges associated with redeployment of staff many lessons can be learned. Front line staff must be supported during an overwhelming number of critical patients. Appropriately planning, preparation and appropriate reeducation of staff are crucial.