

Autogenerated Text Updates for Pediatric Surgical Patients

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Background Information: Waiting while a child has surgery is a stressful time for families. Providing timely updates helps families feel engaged and supported. With a focus on the patient-family experience within the healthcare setting, communication plays an integral part in patient/family perception and satisfaction. The Family Services Nursing role provides liaison services between Operating Room personnel and families to educate, support, and guide families through the perioperative experience. Parent tracker boards are also displayed in the waiting area.

Objectives of Project: Text messaging enables family members to confidently untether themselves from the physical waiting area, without fear of missing an update, and still feel engaged. To optimize communication with families and foster a partnership with the healthcare team, the Perioperative Information Systems (IS) committee at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) explored text messaging as a plausible adjunct to current communication systems.

Process of Implementation: The multidisciplinary members of CHOP's Perioperative IS Committee investigated ways to introduce a non-interactive text communication platform to engage families. Committing to fiscal responsibility, the committee assessed resources already available within the institution. Epic, the electronic medical record used at CHOP, provided the springboard for implementation. Case tracking events in Epic trigger autogenerated, prepopulated texts to families, updating throughout surgery. Messages are sent directly to a family member's mobile device without the need to download a separate application. Additionally, there is no interference with Operating Room nursing workflow.

Statement of Successful Practice: A seven-month retrospective analysis showed a consistent increase to over 75% family enrollment. Texting was further operationalized to include CHOP's bedside medication delivery program providing enrolled families with alerts regarding the status of their medications and time of delivery. Texting was subsequently expanded to include a link to patient family education with need-to-know information for the day of surgery. Family Care Specialist Nurses disseminate monthly Press-Ganey Ambulatory Surgery reports to the Peri-Anesthesia Care Unit staff and committees. Anecdotal feedback from families and Press Ganey comments confirm a positive response to the initiative. This validates that texting is a significant adjunct to improve the patient/family experience.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The use of technology to provide autogenerated text updates promotes patient/family-centered care and patient satisfaction in a convenient and user-friendly way.