

Expansion of a Perioperative Flex Team into the Operating Room

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Background Information: The Perioperative Flex Team is a team of five RNs that support three units across the perioperative setting providing care to patients in preanesthesia, phase 1, phase 2 and discharge home. With high RN vacancy rates identified across the operating rooms, the team recognized an opportunity to expand their scope. The identified OR to assist with staffing provides moderate sedation and a circulating role for diagnostic neurovascular cases.

Objectives of project: Improve RN staffing in the neurovascular OR to ensure efficient high-quality patient care. Increase nurse satisfaction by expanding the knowledge and scope of the flex team RN.

Process of implementation: The Perioperative Flex Team manager and the OR manager collaboratively assessed the current staffing pattern in the identified OR and anticipated staffing needs. A plan was created for orienting the flex team nurse to the neurovascular OR. The flex team started with one nurse who volunteered to be the first to orient. After completing required education, the flex team nurse oriented one to two shifts per week for a total of 108 hours.

Statement of successful practice: One RN from the flex team has completed orientation to the neurovascular operating room and is functioning independently in the moderate sedation role as well as the circulating role. That RN currently works 0.3 of their FTE in the neurovascular OR. A second flex team nurse will begin orientation in November with a plan for all members of the flex team to be trained in the neurovascular OR by Spring 2023.

Implications for advancing the practice of perianesthesia nursing: By expanding the scope of the perioperative flex team into the neurovascular OR through interprofessional collaboration we made a positive impact on patient care and staff satisfaction. Broadening skill sets while addressing vacancy adds value to our team, demonstrating the success and importance of cross training and sharing resources.