

Comprehensive Perioperative Cross-training: The Benefits of Optimizing Staffing

Team Leader: Katherine Douglas MSN RN CPAN

Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Team Members: Nicole Miller BSN RN CCRN, Danielle Mouradjian MSN RN CCRN,
Tiffany M. Snow DNP RN ACNS-BC CCRN

Background Information: Historically, Perianesthesia nurses in our large academic medical center have been trained to care for patients within their specific area of expertise and/or phase of care (preop, PACU, 23-hour extended stay). Changes within the Perioperative Department's Infrastructure, surgical volume, patient acuity, and system wide transformations in Perianesthesia staffing, contributed to the decision to cross-train all nurses within the Perioperative area to all three phases of care. The aim of cross-training was to have greater flexibility with available staff, reduce the dependency on and utilization of the hospital's pool staff, and ultimately improve perioperative patient flow.

Objectives of Project: The primary objective of the project was to determine if cross-training has filled staffing gaps in each Perianesthesia unit. (2) Determine if the project has reduced the use of pool nurses in the Perioperative units. (3) Determine if Perianesthesia nurses feel competent in caring for all patients within the different phases of care.

Process of Implementation: Our Unit's Leadership Team, including the Perioperative CNS and 3 Level IV Clinical Nurses, created and implemented 10 week preceptor driven orientation program which allowed for all Perianesthesia nurses to be competently cross-trained to all areas of clinical care, including the Preoperative unit, Postoperative unit, and the 23-hour extended care unit. Once training was complete, leadership continually preassigned staff to work in each area, in order to maintain competency in caring for Perianesthesia patients through all phases of care.

Results of program implementation: Upon completion of cross-training all staff, leadership has been able to flex Perianesthesia nursing staff to all areas according to volume and daily census. Additionally, all nursing staff have been able to fill staffing gaps due to patient flow issues, vacancies, vacations, call-outs, etc. thereby reducing the need for the use of hospital pool staff. This cross-training orientation program has also reduced the need for overtime bonus and has improved financial implications for the organization.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The cross-training orientation program has allowed more efficient distribution of staffing resulting in improved patient Preoperative and PACU flow, organizational patient flow, reduced OR holds, improved patient satisfaction and optimized Perianesthesia patient outcomes.