The Pathway to Excellence:
Overcoming Challenges to Achieve Recognition

Teri Nguyen, MSN, RN, CCRN   Fiona Madigan, MSN, RN, CPAN, NPD-BC   Melody Hillstrom, MSN-Ed, RN, NPD-BC, CCRN

UC DAVIS HEALTH

MAGNET RECOGNIZED — AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER

Background Information

❖ National excellence awards are a validation for exceeding standards in patient safety, quality care, healthy work environments and a skilled nursing workforce.

❖ The AACN Beacon Award™ for Excellence provides unit-based recognition and achieving this validation authenticates an individual unit's efforts to improve care for patients and families.

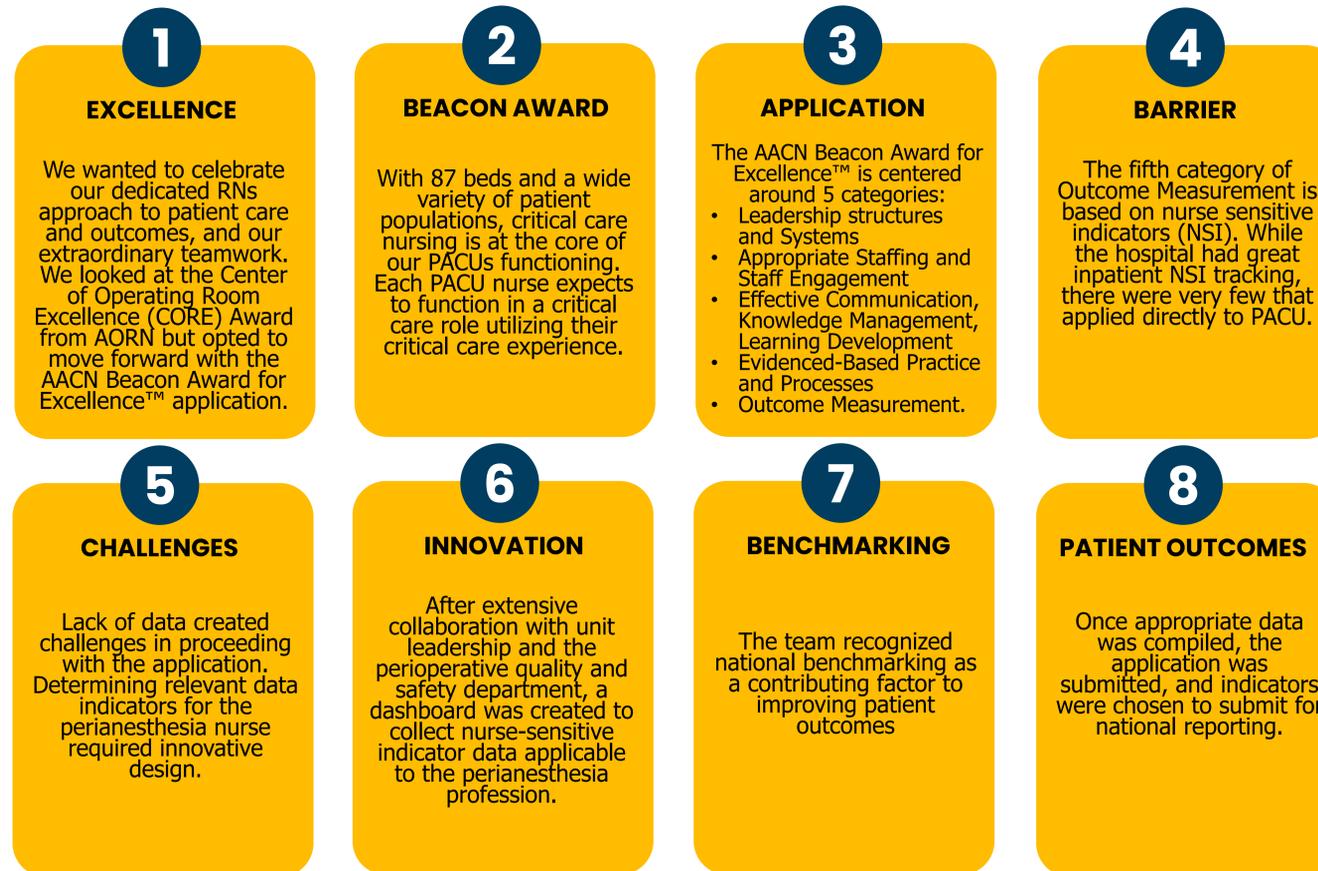❖ Only twelve recovery units in the nation have received the Beacon Award for Excellence.

Project Objective

Demonstrate UC Davis PACU RNs contribution to ensuring patient safety, quality evidence-based care, the creation of healthy work environment, as well as the development and maintenance of competencies.

AACN BEACON AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE™

Process of Implementation

1 EXCELLENCE

We wanted to celebrate our dedicated RNs approach to patient care and outcomes, and our extraordinary teamwork. We looked at the Center of Operating Room Excellence (CORE) Award from AORN but opted to move forward with the AACN Beacon Award for Excellence™ application.

2 BEACON AWARD

With 87 beds and a wide variety of patient populations, critical care nursing is at the core of our PACUs functioning. Each PACU nurse expects to function in a critical care role utilizing their critical care experience.

3 APPLICATION

The AACN Beacon Award for Excellence™ is centered around 5 categories:
- Leadership structures and Systems
- Appropriate Staffing and Staff Engagement
- Effective Communication, Knowledge Management, Learning Development
- Evidenced-Based Practice and Processes
- Outcome Measurement.

4 BARRIER

The fifth category of Outcome Measurement is based on nurse sensitive indicators (NSI). While the hospital had great inpatient NSI tracking, there were very few that applied directly to PACU.

5 CHALLENGES

Lack of data created challenges in proceeding with the application. Determining relevant data indicators for the perianesthesia nurse required innovative design.

6 INNOVATION

After extensive collaboration with unit leadership and the perioperative quality and safety department, a dashboard was created to collect nurse-sensitive indicator data applicable to the perianesthesia profession.

7 BENCHMARKING

The team recognized national benchmarking as a contributing factor to improving patient outcomes

8 PATIENT OUTCOMES

Once appropriate data was compiled, the application was submitted, and indicators were chosen to submit for national reporting.

Development of a Dashboard

PACU BEACON SUMMARY

Statement of Successful Practice

❖ The Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) and Children's Surgery Center PACUs were awarded a Silver Beacon Award for Excellence by the American Association of Critical Nurses in December of 2023.

❖ The Beacon Award for Excellence commends hospital units that engage in evidence-based practices to improve patient and family outcomes.

❖ The recognition illustrates excellence in professional practice, recruitment, retention, education, training and mentoring; research and evidence-based practice; patient outcomes; leadership, and organizational ethics; as well as the creation of a healthy work environment.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing

❖ The PACU's effort to obtain an excellence award boosts morale, fosters better patient outcomes and healthier work environments.

❖ Understanding the barriers and challenges in applying perioperative nurse indicators to a critical care nurse excellence award can spur other PACUs to pursue awards for their units.

❖ Submitting outcome data for national benchmarking recognizes unit achievements and opportunities for growth, advancing perianesthesia nursing practice and acknowledging the profession's importance to patient outcomes.

Acknowledgements