

## **Revolutionizing Perianesthesia Care: A Unified Model for Enhanced Efficiency and Flow in Post-Pandemic Healthcare Setting**

Team Leader: Ellie Jun DNP RN CCRN

Team Member: Kerri Hensler DNP MPA RN CNOR NEA-BC

New York Presbyterian Columbia Irving Medical Center, New York, NY

**Abstract Background Information:** To manage the sharp incline in critically ill patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, these units were merged and staff were uptrained. As the pandemic waned, transitioning back to standard operations unveiled substantial throughput challenges, notably marked by significant delays in operating room flow. Upon reflection, hospital administration decided to permanently unify the three units, drawing on the staff's extensive training and bolstered flexibility and resilience due to the crisis.

**Objectives of Project:** The primary goal was to enhance operational workflows by leveraging the advanced training nurses received during the pandemic. This initiative aimed to sustain high-quality care while elevating process efficiencies.

**Process of Implementation:** The merger was initiated by enhancing staff competencies through targeted education and restructuring staffing model. Creative staff assignment through the day to follow patients flow from pre-op to post-op, ensured seamless care. During this merge, relational leadership approach was essential to build trust and promote a unified team environment. Together, leadership and frontline team created a shared mission and vision, implemented a multimodal communication method and strengthened professional governance through a multilayered mentorship approach.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** The three units were successfully merged into one cohesive unit. This integration established a streamlined flow where nurses followed patient volume from the preoperative to the postoperative phase, enhancing the continuity of care. These improvements yielded a remarkable 95% reduction in PACU hold hours and a 104.5% improvement in first case on time start (FCOTS). Furthermore, this unified approach led to the team earning the Beacon Award — the first Perianesthesia Care Unit in the region to achieve such status.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** Merging preoperative, postoperative, and ambulatory surgery units has significantly enhanced perioperative workflow, thereby improving efficiency, patient outcomes, and cost-effectiveness. Relational leadership approach, which empowers healthcare professionals and makes them integral to the process, and multilayered mentorship strengthen professional governance. The integration not only maximizes resource utilization, it fosters a more resilient nursing team capable of adapting to varying patient care demands.