

## **Charging Ahead: Improving Team Communication Through the Formation of a Charge Nurse Committee**

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**Abstract Background Information:** Charge nurse committees can provide numerous benefits to a healthcare organization, enhancing both operational efficiency and patient care. In our Pre/Post department, we found that by developing a charge nurse committee, we significantly advanced our department by improving patient care, promoting safety, enhancing leadership, and providing a platform for professional growth.

**Objectives of Project:** To ensure the highest standard of patient care by addressing clinical challenges, promoting best practices, improving workflows, and facilitating interdisciplinary communication.

### **Process of Implementation:**

1. Standardize workflows among charge nurses
  - a. Hold regular meetings to review workflow consistency, address issues, and share best practices
  - b. Reinforce every charge nurse follows the same processes for patient admissions, rounding, shift handoffs, and staff delegation
  - c. Regularly gather input from staff to identify areas of improvement and adjust workflows
2. Optimize Phase I & Phase II throughput to decrease OR hold potential
  - a. Establish and strictly adhere to clear clinical criteria for moving patients from Phase I to Phase II
  - b. Ensure appropriate staffing levels in the PACU per ASPAN guidelines
  - c. A fast-track process that moves patients directly to Phase II, bypassing Phase I
3. Improve interdepartmental communication (Anesthesia providers, PT/OT, Pharmacy, Inpatient units)
  - a. Stress the importance of our bedside handoff tool, request anesthesia providers to signout to PACU charge, confirm OR charge nurse signed in to Vocera daily
  - b. Established clear guidelines on when and where patients work with PT/OT
  - c. Created shadow opportunities with the Pharmacy to better understand each other's workflow
  - d. Set clear expectations on the timeframe for reasonable PACU to inpatient unit admission

**Statement of Successful Practice:** By providing a collaborative platform for charge nurses to share best practices, address challenges, and implement solutions, the committee plays a pivotal role in evolving the practice of perianesthesia nursing.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** As demonstrated, we have implemented practices and standards of care that not only enhance the patient experience but improve interdisciplinary communication; fostering a supportive, empowered environment for nurses. This initiative has shaped an informed and effective perianesthesia nursing workforce, where charge nurses act as advocates, creating a support system that aids nurses in navigating the demands of their roles, leading to more effective healthcare delivery.