

## **Care of the High Acuity PACU Patient: Putting Together the Puzzle**

Team Leader: Julie McQuieter MSN-Ed RN CPAN

Team Members: Lindsey Gearllach MSN RN PNCC-CMC, Kristina Ryding BSN RN PCCN,  
Crystal Carriveaux BSN RN  
St. Michael Medical Center, Silverdale, WA

**Abstract Background Information:** An informal needs assessment was conducted among Phase I nursing staff at a 275-bed hospital in Washington State. The nurses highlighted the need for more education around care of complex, high acuity PACU patients.

**Objectives of Project:** The objective of this project was to increase nursing knowledge related to care of high acuity patients in the Phase I PACU setting.

**Process of Implementation:** Content for the class revolved around the most common education requests from nursing staff including care after hybrid ablation MAZE procedures, arterial sheath management, transvenous pacemakers, vasoactive drip titration, and management of ventilators in the PACU setting. The perianesthesia educator contacted subject matter experts including the cath lab nursing supervisor, a respiratory therapist, critical care unit educator, and nurse with a strong background in transvenous pacemakers. Various adult learning principles were employed by subject matter experts including the use of hands-on practice with transvenous pacemakers, patient videos, lecture, and question-and-answer sessions. A total of 19 nurses attended the 4-hour class, offered on two separate days to accommodate schedules. Feedback was gathered in the form of written evaluations at the end of each class. Suggestions from the first class were included in the class the following week and included more case scenarios and hands-on time with devices.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** 87% of the nurses who attended the sessions rated the overall evaluation of the presentation as excellent. Common themes regarding class content were that the presentations were helpful, added to the nurses knowledge, and provided a good review. Other evaluation suggestions will be incorporated into future education opportunities.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** As our population continues to age, we are seeing a higher volume of complex recovery patients. Providing need-based education on the care of high-acuity patients may improve nursing competence and confidence in the Phase I PACU setting.