

Shots and Snoozes: Immunization During Planned Pediatric Sedation

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Abstract Background Information: At a large academic medical center, pediatric subspecialty practices have long used a workflow to collect phlebotomy specimens during sedated procedures. Building on this success, a similar process was developed to administer immunizations to pediatric patients—particularly those requiring frequent sedation and those with anxiety or needle phobia. Integrating vaccines into sedated procedures helps overcome barriers to vaccination, with up to 18% of overdue pediatric patients citing needle phobia as a primary concern (Taddio et al., 2022).

Objectives of Project: This initiative aimed to bundle immunizations with sedated procedures, allowing immunizations to be administered to pediatric patients who might otherwise remain unvaccinated due to significant needle phobias or behavioral challenges.

Process of Implementation: A multidisciplinary team—including anesthesia providers, pediatricians, nursing leaders, and informatics staff—mapped out a workflow for vaccine administration during sedated procedures. Through a series of planning meetings, the team refined the workflow from order entry to vaccine administration. In the finalized workflow, pediatric subspecialists place vaccine orders in the intraoperative phase of care, triggering an interruptive Our Patient Advisory (OPA) alert for the perianesthesia nurse. The nurse then reviews an immunization checklist with the family, confirms eligibility, releases the orders, and prints Vaccine Information Sheets (VIS). The anesthesiologist reviews the VIS during sedation consent then administers and documents the vaccine during the procedure.

Statement of Successful Practice: Since implementation in October 2024, 22 pediatric patients have received a total of 41 vaccines under sedation. Process issues were addressed promptly, and the workflow has gained interest across the health system—including potential expansion beyond pediatric subspecialty practices to serve additional populations.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The workflow necessitates close coordination among pediatric subspecialists, anesthesiologists, and perianesthesia nurses—strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration and communication, which are vital for safe and efficient care delivery. This initiative highlights how perianesthesia nurses can expand their scope of practice by incorporating immunization delivery into perioperative care. Moreover, extending this model to include special populations—such as adults with developmental disabilities or individuals with needle phobias—demonstrates the adaptability and leadership of perianesthesia nurses in meeting diverse patient needs.