

## **Optimizing Patient Flow Through the Implementation of an Ambulatory Postoperative Recovery Area**

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**Abstract Background Information:** J1-2 is a cardiac, vascular, and thoracic preoperative unit at the Cleveland Clinic that identified a growing need for an ambulatory postoperative recovery area. The initiative emerged in response to frequent operating room and post-anesthesia care unit bed holds, which led to surgical delays, PACU backups, case cancellations, and prolonged patient length of stay. These challenges affected both patient satisfaction and overall operational efficiency across the perioperative continuum.

**Objectives of Project:** The primary goal of this project was to optimize patient flow, minimize surgical delays, and ensure timely postoperative bed availability through the development of an ambulatory recovery area within the J1-2 unit.

### **Process of Implementation:**

- Identified the patient population appropriate for postoperative recovery in J1-2.
- Provided staff education on postoperative recovery standards and TR band management.
- Developed a standardized report sheet to facilitate communication and continuity of care.
- Communicated goals, roles, and expectations to all team members.
- Designed and implemented a workflow tailored to patient needs and unit capacity.
- Collaborated with Cleveland Clinic emergency response and respiratory therapy teams to establish emergency protocols.
- Coordinated with the PACU to develop contingency plans for patients requiring extended recovery, as J1-2 closes at 6:30 p.m.
- Created a structured discharge protocol to promote safe and efficient transitions of care.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** Since implementing the ambulatory postoperative recovery area, the unit has achieved measurable improvements in operational efficiency. The project resulted in an 80% reduction in both PACU and OR hold times during the third quarter. Additional outcomes included decreased case cancellations, reduced patient length of stay, and enhanced staff workflow satisfaction.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** This initiative demonstrates how innovative, evidence-based practice can drive improvements in perioperative efficiency and patient outcomes. It highlights the importance of intradisciplinary collaboration, continuous education, and proactive problem-solving in advancing the role of the perianesthesia nurse as both a clinical leader and advocate for quality patient care.