

Project ICOUGH™: A Breath of Fresh Air in Surgical Recovery

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Abstract Background Information: ICOUGH™ was developed by a multidisciplinary team at Boston Medical Center as a strategy to reduce pulmonary complications after surgery; the acronym stands for Incentive Spirometry, Cough/Deep Breathing, Oral Care, Understanding (Education), Getting Out Of Bed, Head of Bed Elevation. This standardized postoperative care program emphasizes patient education, early mobilization, and pulmonary interventions to reduce the incidence of postoperative pneumonia and unplanned intubation among patients.

Objectives of Project: The aim of this project was to integrate the ICOUGH™ protocol into practice at a large Level I Trauma academic medical center's post anesthesia care unit (PACU) to improve patient outcomes and provide best in class care.

Process of Implementation:

- Observed and identified current state of ICOUGH™ intervention use
- Developed a survey for our clinical staff inquiring how to achieve integration of the ICOUGH™ bundle into daily nursing care
- Created a multidisciplinary taskforce to help analyze data and develop strategies to incorporate the ICOUGH™ protocol into a complex and dynamic PACU setting
- Implemented a post-education data collection tool to assess interventions and their effectiveness
- Evaluated the efficacy of the ICOUGH™ integration strategy to sustain and determine what was working and what was needed improvement

Statement of Successful Practice:

- Patient/caregiver education on importance of the ICOUGH™ protocol to their surgical recovery
- Clinical staff education on ICOUGH™ integration into daily practice
- Visual cues and reminders for patients and staff placed around unit to reinforce education
- ICOUGH™ rounds incorporated to assess implementation of interventions
- Ongoing Performance Improvement (PI) metrics collected by taskforce to assess and evaluate integration strategy

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Integration of the ICOUGH™ protocol in a 78 bed PACU setting empowered patients to take initiative and utilize the interventions throughout their PACU recovery process with the support and encouragement of clinical staff. Utilizing the data collection tool found that prior to implementation of the ICOUGH™ protocol there was a 12% incorporation of interventions. After implementing the ICOUGH™ integration strategy there was an increase to 35% in ICOUGH™ interventions across the unit. A goal of 80% compliance with ICOUGH™ is hoped

to be achieved by integrating this successful protocol with proven results into the foundation of post operative recovery care.