

Developing and Expanding the Role of the Perioperative NP Role in a New Space

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Abstract Background Information: In 2023, Cohen Children's Medical Center (CCMC) opened a new, dedicated pediatric perioperative unit with 8 ORs and a 26-bed ASU/PACU, separating from its previous arrangement of sharing facilities and adult-focused staff with adult patients. CCMC had already identified a critical need for a constant provider, specifically trained in both pediatrics and ICU, to ensure patient safety and manage perioperative care. While a provider was already assisting with pre-operative assessments and ambulatory patients, the new dedicated space intensified the need to expand this role to offer comprehensive support to anesthesia in the recovery area and assist nurses with post-operative patient management in the PACU.

Objectives of Project: Key Objectives:

- Enhance Patient Safety and Quality of Care
- Optimize Operational Efficiency and Patient Throughput
- Strengthen Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Provider Support
- Define and Expand the Scope of the Perioperative NP Role

Process of Implementation: To address the need for continuous perioperative support, CCMC established three full-time Nurse Practitioner (NP) positions with overlapping Monday-Friday schedules (7 am-8 pm and 10 am-11 pm). This coverage spans busy morning pre-operative processes and late-night case recoveries, essential for pediatric patients with short OR times. These NPs comprehensively manage pre and post-operative patients, handling order entry, bedside emergencies, post-op pain, nausea, vomiting, and emergence delirium. They facilitate discharge throughput by assisting with prescriptions, follow-up tests, and consultations. Additionally, NPs support ICU teams by managing critical patients until bed availability, ensuring timely order and medication management. Their role has also enabled the implementation of new policies for pre-op sedation, corneal abrasions, and emergence delirium.

Statement of Successful Practice: Having a constant provider in a perioperative space allows the unit to run more efficiently, and the ability to address patient issues in real time with no delays in care. We facilitate operative and recovery throughput seeing less time in delays with incorrect prescriptions, patient management and communication with surgical services.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: In essence, the project demonstrates that investing in dedicated, specialized perioperative NP roles is not merely an addition of staff, but a strategic enhancement that fundamentally transforms the efficiency, safety, and quality of care delivery in a complex, high-acuity environment like pediatric perioperative services.