

## **How the Periop Throughput Nurse Decreases Postop Patients Time Spent in PACU**

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**Abstract Background Information:** Patients are spending more time in PACU because the assigned nurse is often away from the bedside to prepare discharge instructions, gather family from waiting room, and transport patients to the car. This project aims to improve PACU efficiencies.

**Objectives of Project:** Our project aims to show the benefits of an assigned throughput/charge nurse to expedite discharge and reduce PACU time.

**Process of Implementation:** The ASC held multiple staff meetings to discuss the need for new leadership role. In September 2024, we decided the role would be implemented once the department was fully staffed and new staff were done with orientation. Expectations of the role were decided upon, taking into consideration Main Campus staffing coordinator and charge nurse roles. The throughput nurse, as we named it, would have no patient assignment and would streamline operations in pre and post op. Approval to integrate this role occurred in November 2024 and a small group of novice nurses were chosen to fill the role. PACU length of stay times were measured monthly to evaluate the efficiency and benefits of the role.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** Before the intervention, the average monthly PACU length of stay in September and October 2024 was 45 and 48 minutes, respectively. After implementing the throughput nurse role in November 2024, the PACU length of stay decreased to 43 minutes, and remained at 43 minutes in December 2024. This represents a 7.5% reduction in PACU length of stay following the intervention.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** By decreasing time spent in PACU, we have increased efficiencies and patient safety, resulting in cost savings for the department. This role also enhances nurse and patient satisfaction, as evidence by our patient satisfaction score for teamwork improving from 90.5 in 2024 to 93.3 in 2025. Limitations include ensuring appropriate staffing. Next steps involve maintaining the role consistently, as it is a nurse satisfier.