DECREASING OUTPATIENT SURGERY LENGTH OF STAY RELATED TO DISPOSITION OF NARCOTIC PRESCRIPTIONS
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Background Information:
• Inconsistent issuance of narcotic prescriptions by providers resulted in delayed discharge and increased length of stay (LOS) of outpatients in the PACU.
• Providers wrote narcotic prescriptions in Prep and left them in the chart without proper communication with the nurses; a violation to the Hospital Medication Order policy on the management and storage of narcotic prescription.¹
• This warranted the creation of a performance improvement team to address such violation.

Objective:
• To address the management and storage of narcotic prescriptions issued in the Prep Unit.

Implementation Process:
• Workflow and documentation processes:
  ▪ Narcotic prescriptions were directly given to the family by the provider for filling, with patient’s approval during the preoperative period.
  ▪ Narcotic prescriptions were stored in the medication station when the families were not present.
  ▪ Narcotic prescriptions were documented by the nurse in the pre-procedure note and on the communication board delineating if given to the family or stored in the medication station.
• All nurses were educated on the process prior to implementation.
• Practice initiative was monitored over a six month period.

Successful Practice:
• Standardized process on the management and storage of narcotic prescription for Prep and PACU was created.
• Narcotic prescriptions were filled while patient surgery was in progress.

Outcomes:
• Standardized process on the management and storage of narcotic prescription decreased the LOS and facilitated the discharge of outpatients from the PACU.
• Eliminating PACU wait time related to narcotic prescription has improved patient, family, and staff satisfaction and has promoted a positive hospital experience.