

## **NURSE-DRIVEN ASSESSMENT OF POST-SURGICAL FLAPS**

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**Background Information:** In the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU), nurses are responsible for monitoring the viability of post-surgical flaps in the immediate postoperative period. There are specific measurements that are required to safely and effectively monitor post-surgical flaps. During handoff, nurses noticed inconsistencies in flap nursing documentation. This was due to the lack of a standard parameter accessible in the electronic medical record (EMR).

**Objectives of Project:** The objective of this project is to create a standardized flap assessment parameter in the EMR that documents specific flap criteria.

**Process of Implementation:** Retrospective chart review was conducted for three months to evaluate inconsistencies in flap parameter documentation. The data highlighted variability in flap criteria assessment and documentation. PACU nurses collaborated with physicians to create a standardized flap assessment in the EMR. The Flap Parameter was presented to the cross-campus EMR Committee and achieved approval. PACU Nurses were educated on how to properly document on the Flap Assessment Parameter in the EMR. Post-implementation chart reviews were completed to review assessment and documentation consistency with the newly implemented EMR Flap Parameter.

**Statement of Successful Practice:** After implementation, chart review validated that the percentage of nurses who utilized the flap parameter improved from 67% to 100%. Any change in the flap viability can be easily trended through this parameter. Standardization of the post-surgical flap documentation supported consistent and safe monitoring of flap viability.

**Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing:** Nurse driven creation and implementation of the standardized Flap Parameter assessment is a key element in safety and nursing quality of care.