

REDUCING OR DELAYS: CROSS TRAINING AND FRONTLINE ENGAGEMENT IMPROVES PATIENT FLOW IN A TERTIARY PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

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Background Information: Arkansas Children's Hospital is a Level I Trauma Center annually serving approximately 16,000 patients undergoing general anesthesia or deep sedation for surgeries or procedures. Previous staffing models were inflexible, limiting nursing resources by restricting staff to specific areas and resulting in increases in Operating Room (OR) turnover times and impedance to patient flow.

Objectives of Project: Improve patient flow by decreasing OR delays related to nurse availability in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

Process of Implementation: Review of the ASPAN standards introduced the concept of pairing patients based on acuity and attainment of certain critical elements. New expectations were established requiring staff to cross train to all PeriAnesthesia areas. A frontline improvement team established best practice for discharging patients home from Phase I versus Phase II based on procedure type. PACU pods were tested to recover noncomplex patients with a 2:3 RN ratio, based on ASPAN standards. iPad reports were trialed to streamline inpatient transfers, as these averaged 20-30 minutes and contributed to lack of RN availability on the unit. Team leader development was achieved through teambuilding exercises, enhanced electronic communication, and the implementation of a monthly team leader meeting. In partnership with unit Nursing Councils, an electronic hand off was implemented, decreasing circulator time required for patient report to PACU while enhancing perioperative communication. Leadership promoted work life balance by providing opportunities to modify schedules. Team leaders were engaged to monitor flow, communicate needs, and implement an afternoon huddle to review remaining case load and nursing resources.

Statement of Successful Practice:

Percentage of OR delays, comparison= 86% reduction in OR delay minutes

Percentage of Perioperative staff cross trained = 14% increase in cross-trained RN's

Implications for Advancing the Practice of PeriAnesthesia Nursing: Created a more engaged and flexible workforce, allowed all in PeriAnesthesia services to function as one team. Improved understanding of ASPAN standards for care delivery models.