Background
• In January 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic caused limited ICU bed availability at Strong Memorial Hospital.
• Immediate post-op critical care patients were staying in the PACU for multiple nights due to over-capacity of critical care units.

Objectives of Project
• Load balance the ICUs by caring for chronic critical care patients in the PACU.
• Empower perioperative staff to become more confident in caring for ICU patients by utilizing a team-based nursing model.

Process of Implementation
• Created safe team nursing model by pairing a PACU RN with an Ambulatory Surgical RN, a Pre-Op RN, or a CRNA.
• Configure geographic location for safe patient care within an open concept PACU.
• Collaborated with supply chain and resuscitation council to obtain safety equipment and supplies.
• Daily ICU situational awareness meeting to determine appropriate patients to be cared for in Post Anesthesia Response Unit (PARU).
• Advocated for nurse and patient safety

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Peri Anesthesia Nurses
• Improve interdepartmental relationships between perioperative services and critical care.
• Enhanced emergency preparedness.

Statement of Successful Practice
• PARU’s contribution successfully supported the expansion of critical care beds during the influx of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.
• During the 46 days PARU was open, there were a total of 26 patients who received care.
  • 3 Discharged to a Long Term Ventilator Unit
  • 11 Transitioned to Med-Surg Floors
  • 6 Returned to the ICU
  • 3 Transitioned to Comfort Measures

"Having the ambulatory nurses and CRNA’s made the PARU work. We could not have done it without them." – PACU RN