

Building Bridges: Creating a Perianesthesia and Operating Room Committee

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Background Information: While perianesthesia and the operating room work in concert, there can often be a divide between departments. Following an increase in safety events related to documentation of surgical dressings, drains and catheters, a work group was subsequently formed. Within the group, there was a realization that increasing lines of communication between both the perianesthesia and operating room nursing teams, could lead to successful initiatives and a sense of collaboration. This shifted a short-term workgroup into a long-term committee.

Objectives of Project: In preparation for instituting the committee, membership and co-chairs needed to be established. The leadership team decided on a minimum of three staff nurses from each department, with opportunity for additional members if needed. While leadership was to help support initiatives, the clinical nurse co-chairs were given guidance on how to prepare meeting agendas and solicit topics from respective departments. While topics may shift due to divisional needs, optimizing patient safety and outcomes in the perioperative care continuum is the priority.

Process of Implementation: Once membership was established, meetings were scheduled once a month, for one hour. Members from both the operating room and perianesthesia attended in both in-person and virtual formats. When an initiative would require input from an interprofessional team member, such as infection prevention or informatics, they would be invited to provide guidance.

Statement of Successful Practice: Following the implementation of the PACU/OR Committee, several successful interventions and collaborative efforts have been established. Documentation compliance has been sustained in relation to surgical dressings, drains and catheters for handoff communication. Standardization of the process to notify support persons through the perioperative care continuum have been determined within this group. Product trials which benefit the surgical patient such as hair removal vacuums and straight catheter kits, have stemmed from this interdepartmental nursing team. Team building and charitable events from this group help to promote engagement and community outreach.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Interdepartmental collaboration between perianesthesia and the operating room can increase lines of communication and successful interventions. This forum allows clinical staff nurses to constructively view problems and encompass different lenses of the process. While perioperative leadership assists in some aspects, elevating clinical nursing staff from both the PACU and Operating room promotes departmental partnership.