

**Perianesthesia Emergency Nurse (PEN):
Developing a Role to Assist with High Acuity Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) Patients**

Team Leader: Hollie Thornton MSGH BSN CCRN SANE-A
Mayo Clinic, Phoenix, Arizona

Team Members: Jacque Crosson DNP RN CPAN FASPN,
Jessica Wilson BSN RN CPAN, JoAnn Anderson MSN RN CPAN

Background Information:

- Increase in medical events noted
- Rise in higher acuity postoperative patients
- Challenges in hiring experienced critical care nurses
- Staff perceived the need for additional emergency resources
- Literature searched for perianesthesia programs to address emergent events with no results

Objectives of Project:

The role of PEN Nurse is to:

- Assist with patients with altered hemodynamics or exhibiting higher acuity
- Be a resource for high-risk medications, procedures and equipment
- Administer timely interventions
- Provide staff support during an event
- Ensure patients are admitted to the appropriate level of care or remain in PACU until stable for the floor assigned
- Support onboarding of staff with less previous high acuity clinical expertise while ensuring safe care

Process of Implementation:

- Identified the need and completed a literature review
- Secured a physician champion
- Developed the role loosely based off a rapid response nurse model
- Compiled the necessary qualifications for the PEN
- Classes for the first PENS
- Program education to anesthesia, PACU nurses, management
- Created a database to log our events
- Tried the role as a pilot

Statement of Successful Practice: The PEN is a permanent role supported by staff, anesthesia, management and the organization. Since the program's inception the average percentage of postanesthesia patients that trigger a rapid response call have decreased. If the patient is seen by the PEN in the PACU the percentage drops considerably further. Staff nurses were asked, "Do you feel the PEN role has been beneficial in our environment to help mitigate and assist with medical events?", one hundred percent responded "yes". Database information has taught us valuable information that improves the quality and safety of the patient care we provide.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The PEN role is a new concept in the perianesthesia realm. Its creation is beneficial for staff and patients. It helps with nurse satisfaction, recruitment, and retention; as nurses feel more supported and have an

available resource during patient events. The PEN role creates an additional layer of patient safety, ensuring patients at risk for decompensation are identified early and intervened upon in a timely manner. It also decreases rapid response calls on post anesthesia patients within the first twenty four hours and ensures the patient is admitted to the appropriate level of care.