



Perianesthesia Emergency Nurse (PEN)

Increasing safety after anesthesia

Perianesthesia Emergency Nurse (PEN): A Resource to Assist with High Acuity Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) Patients

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BACKGROUND

- Increase in medical events noted
- Rise in higher acuity postoperative patients in PACU
- Staff perceived the need for additional emergency resources
- Literature search completed for perianesthesia programs to address emergent events; no results found

ROLE DESCRIPTION

- Assist with patients in the recovery room showing signs of [altered hemodynamics](#) or exhibiting [higher acuity](#)
- Act as a [resource](#) for high-risk medications, procedures and equipment that are infrequently encountered.
- Administer [timely interventions](#) in the PACU
- Provide [staff support](#) during an event
- Ensure patient is admitted to the [right place](#) at the [right time](#) ([appropriate level of care](#) ordered and [remains in PACU](#) until stable for the floor to which they are assigned)
- [Support onboarding of staff](#) with less previous high acuity clinical expertise and allow for safe care despite recruitment changes
- This is a PACU nurse with excellent clinical and communications skills with at least [2 years of critical care](#) experience.
- Primarily staffed between 0730-2000 Monday-Friday.

IMPLEMENTATION

- 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
- Trialed the role as an 8-week pilot, now permanent role

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 surveyed, "Do you feel the PEN role has been beneficial in our environment to help mitigate and assist with medical events?", 98.4% responded "yes".
- Database metrics have taught us valuable information that improves the quality and safety of the patient care we provide.