The Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) ‘Suggestion Box’ revealed a recurring concern related to workflow inefficiencies between PACU and Pharmacy, such as medication order verification delays, gaps in communication, and patient-specific medications not being stocked in the automated dispensing cabinet (ADC) for overnight PACU patients.

Timely ADC restocking and medication order verification by the pharmacy minimizes disruption in medication schedules and risk of medication errors.

Our objective was to optimize the PACU-Pharmacy workflow to reduce patient care delays and improve staff satisfaction.

**Results**

**Background**

- The Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) ‘Suggestion Box’ revealed a recurring concern related to workflow inefficiencies between PACU and Pharmacy, such as medication order verification delays, gaps in communication, and patient-specific medications not being stocked in the automated dispensing cabinet (ADC) for overnight PACU patients.
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- Our objective was to optimize the PACU-Pharmacy workflow to reduce patient care delays and improve staff satisfaction.

**Methods**

**Data Collection** through a three-question survey

**Collaboration** – Partnered with our perioperative pharmacy leadership to enact process improvement. We held a PACU-Pharmacy staff huddle to share insights into our challenges and explored alternative workflow practices.

**New Practices:**

- **Use of Epic Secure Chat** to communicate with the Pharmacy, resulting in:
  - ↓ phone calls
  - ↓ disruptions
  - ↓ response time
- **Set an expectation of a 10-minute turnaround time for new medication orders to be verified**
- **Data was pulled from the patient census in PACU at 6 AM so that morning medications are stocked in the ADC for overnight patients**

**Staff in-services:** Familiarize both Pharmacy and PACU staff with the newly developed processes. We administered follow-up surveys to gauge progress and improvements, and ensure practices were still in place.

**Key Findings**

- We demonstrated improvement across all aspects posed in our pre- and post-intervention surveys.
- While there were overall improvements in current workflow (Q#1) and medication verification (Q#3), nursing satisfaction for Overnighter medications being stocked (Q#2) remained below 25%.

**Discussion**

- The timely provision of care, such as medication administration is crucial to preventing harm caused by workflow inefficiencies.
- Collaboration and streamlined processes are essential for optimizing care delivery and long-term success.
- Ongoing surveys, discussions, and collaboration with Pharmacy is needed to ensure the sustainability of implemented improvements.

**References**
