

PATIENT LIAISON - BRIDGING THE GAP OF COMMUNICATION TO PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

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Identification of the problem – Overview: Consistency is critical in facilitating the admission process to the operating room (OR). In the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) we capture monthly data in relation to preoperative room delays and patient notification of these delays. Our target goal has been 90% or higher for patient notification of surgery delays. For fiscal year 2014 our score has remained on average 84% related to the inability of the preoperative staff being available to communicate with patients and families. Communication also affects our patient satisfaction scores. Complaints have been addressed monthly related to patient and families' inability to get information in the waiting areas, having the lobby area unattended between the hours of 0600-0900, and lack of posted contact information.

EP Question/Purpose: Will having a patient liaison in the lobby area help improve on timely surgery starts, decrease cost, facilitate the admission process, improve our patient/family notification of delay and increase our patient satisfaction scores?

Methods/Evidence: PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act). With Unit Practice Council (UPC) approval, a patient liaison was trained to be in the lobby area starting at 6a. This is the time that patients arrive in the preoperative waiting area for surgery. The patient liaison will have access to the surgical schedule and collaborate with the OR/Preop/PACU to improve efficiency by updating patients and families along with bridging the gap of communication in relation to preoperative delays and updating families of patient's status. We will analyze the data by recording how many patient and family interactions the liaison encountered. We will also perform post-operative rounding on the patients to ask if questions and concerns were addressed on admission. We will continue our monthly performance measures and determine if the percentage of preoperative room delays and patient/family notification of delays improved during our test of change. The goal is to complete the test of change and assess if a permanent position will benefit our patients and increase our patient satisfaction scores.

Significance of Findings/Outcomes: Our data analysis showed improvement in our preoperative room delays and patient/ family notification. The fiscal year 2015 and 2016, was consistently 99-100%. Complaints related to morning lobby updates or lobby areas being unattended have been zero since we started this project.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: The success of this project has encouraged the author to standardize the patient liaison position to all the different PACU lobbies in the organization. Currently all 5 preoperative waiting areas have a full time patient liaison starting at 0600.