Improving PACU Throughput: Expediting Phase I Care

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Results

To reduce PACU Phase I LOS from 150 minutes to 90 minutes by April 30, 2023.

Description of Data Collection and Analysis

The process of developing a SMART goal and identifying a key metric or Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is an essential first step in our A3 methodology. We also identify a "watch metric" or supporting leading indicator that correlates with our KPI. In our case, we utilized Tableau reports to track Weinberg PACU Phase I LOS, while nursing time reports were used to monitor compliance. These reports were shared with staff on a monthly basis in the form of Tableau reports and line graphs that were emailed out regularly. This approach helped us to keep track of the progress and identify areas that required improvement. In our improvement effort, the identification and prioritization of root causes of failures were crucial steps. We created a process map, fishbone diagram, and driver diagram to analyze the barriers and facilitators of change. By doing so, we were able to identify the areas that needed improvement and take concrete steps to address them. This approach helped us optimize processes, improve efficiency, and increase overall performance. By prioritizing the root causes of the problem, we were able to address the issues that had the most significant impact on our performance, leading to sustainable improvements in our processes.

Discussion: Implications for Practice and Lessons Learned

The successful implementation of this quality improvement project has helped to enhance the efficiency of PACU Phase I care and has improved throughput. This improvement is applicable to all PACUs at JHH and can significantly reduce Phase I length of stay. By leveraging the principles and tools of Lean Sigma, we were able to identify both the obstacles and the facilitators for change implementation. This process of change has resulted in our nurses being empowered, providing them with greater autonomy in discharging their patients. This, in turn, has instilled a sense of pride and satisfaction amongst the nursing staff, who now feel they have made a meaningful contribution to safe and efficient patient care.

Sustainability: Achieving High Reliability Team

Significant improvements on PACU Phase I LOS were shown on the monthly metric. Monthly reports line graphs emailed to staff. Eight months after intervention, PACU Phase I LOS went down to 106.6 min and sustaining the momentum, to date, it is 96.1 min which is 36% decrease from baseline of 150 minutes.