

## **Improving Handoff in Perioperative Services**

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**Introduction:** Evidence supports that using a handoff tool/checklist and PACU Pause in the perioperative area improves information exchange, handoff quality, handoff satisfaction, handoff efficiency, and decreases errors.

**Identification of the Problem:** A gap analysis revealed that there was no standardization of handoff in our perioperative area. When asked about handoff, PACU nurses reported that there were inconsistencies in the information communicated and rated handoff satisfaction, quality, and efficiency at 5.97/10.

**QI Question/Purpose of the Study:** How does the use of a standardized perioperative handoff tool and process, compared to standard practice, affect PACU nurses' ratings towards handoff satisfaction, quality, and efficiency?

**Methods:** A standardized handoff tool and process (including PACU Pause) was developed based on evidence and stakeholder feedback. Education was provided to nurses through email, one-on-one coaching, and huddles.

**Outcomes/Results:** Overall adoption of the process change in PreOp, OR, and Endo averaged 66%. PACU nurses' ratings of handoff satisfaction, quality, and efficiency increased from 5.97/10 to 7.05/10.

**Discussion:** Due to a necessary swift implementation of the handoff tool, minimal education was completed, resulting in a lower adoption percentage. It was also challenging to measure communication, which is why data had to be collected from surveys rather than direct outcome data.

**Conclusion:** There is clear evidence that communication during handoff can be improved in the perioperative area through the use of a standardized tool and process. Work is ongoing to assure adoption and sustainability.

**Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research:** Although adoption was low, this project initiated the conversation about the importance of handoff in the perioperative area and its positive effects on nurses and patients. It also laid a foundation for a standardized handoff process. Based on these results, we encourage you to evaluate your current handoff processes and consider implementing a standardized approach, preferably with the use of a checklist or tool.