Communicating Perioperative & Procedural Delays: Enhancing Patient Experience







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Results







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Abstract

Effective communication regarding perioperative delays is critical for patient satisfaction. In early 2023, the perioperative services department at a tertiary academic medical center ranked in the 20th percentile nationally and the 6th percentile in the University Health System Consortium (UHC) for patient satisfaction in communicating delays. The aim of this project was to improve the communication of delays to patients experiencing delays on the day of surgery, enhancing patient satisfaction through the implementation of standardized communication strategies. Using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) framework, several interventions were implemented. Initial results indicated mixed feedback; while some patients appreciated the timely SMS updates, others continued to report dissatisfaction with long wait times. As of February 2024, the facility's ranking improved to the 15th percentile of the UHC for patient satisfaction in delay communication. While the SMS system and AIDET® training showed promise, challenges such as inconsistent staff adherence, lack of automation, and language barriers persisted. Addressing these issues will be crucial for sustaining improvements. This quality improvement initiative demonstrated the importance of clear, consistent communication in managing patient expectations during perioperative delays, and maintaining a positive patient experience. Continued quality improvement initiatives can help standardize practices and better utilize technology to enhance the patient experience.

Introduction

Effective communication regarding perioperative delays is critical for patient satisfaction.³ Delays often frustrate patients, and inadequate communication exacerbates the situation, negatively impacting the patient experience.

The perioperative services departments at Rush University Medical Center surveyed patients on how well staff *communicated related to delays*; a top-box score indicates patients were *always* informed of delays. In the months of January 2023 through March 2023 (Fiscal Year 2023, Q3), this project site ranked in the 20th percentile of the Press Ganey national database. Furthermore, compared to the University HealthSystem Consortium (UHC), this medical center only ranked in the 6th percentile for this period.

FY23 Perioperative Services	Q1 (mean score)		UHC rank	N	Q2 (mean score)		UHC rank	N	Q3 (mean score)	Natl rank	UHC rank	N	Q4 (mean score)	Natl rank	UHC rank	N
"degree to which you were informed of any delays"	89.7	43	47	129	89.4	40	43	123	86	20	6	166	88.2	29	11	140

Methodology

Outcome & Process Objectives

Short-term:

□By February 2024, the patient satisfaction top box score of *the degree to which* staff communicated delays will rank at the 15th percentile or better among the University HealthSystem Consortium (UHC).

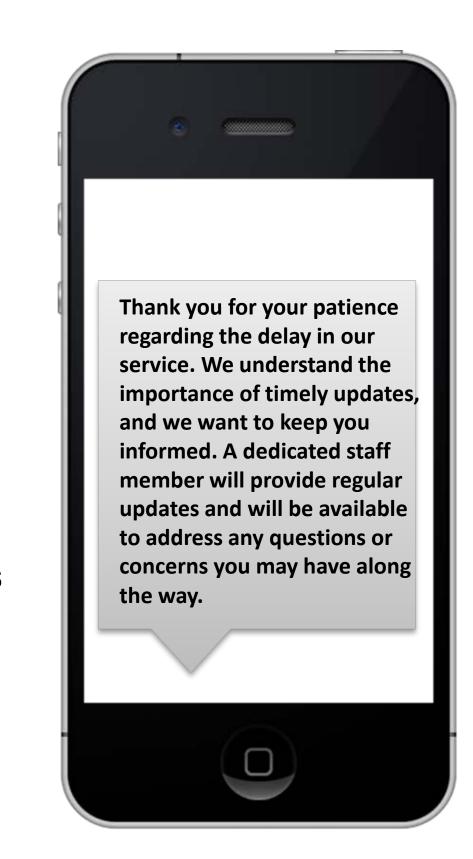
Long-term:

□ By September 2024, the patient satisfaction top box score of *the degree to which* staff communicated delays will rank at the 20th percentile or better among the University HealthSystem Consortium (UHC).

The project outcome objectives will be achieved by meeting the following process objectives: (1) Perioperative nursing staff will employ AIDET® principles 95% of the time, and (2) SMS surgical delay message will be employed with 95% of perioperative patients experiencing a delay in service of 15 minutes or more.

Interventions

- 1. **AIDET® Training**: 100% of perioperative nursing staff completed training on AIDET® communication principles (Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation, and Thank You) to ensure consistent messaging during patient interactions.
- 2. **SMS Notifications**: Leveraging current technology, a custom text messaging system was introduced in September 2023 to notify patients of delays exceeding 15 minutes pre-operatively. After a successful pilot, it was expanded to all surgical patients in October 2023.
- 3. **Monthly Data Review**: An interdisciplinary taskforce was formed to review patient satisfaction data and adjust the interventions as needed.



Qualitative Data

Гһете	Sentiment	Quotations				
Communication & Information		"I waited more than an hour after my scheduled time in the waiting room with no information about delays."				
Waiting Time	 Negative Customers expressing dissatisfaction over long wait times 	"Everyone was cordial, but my procedure was scheduled for 1:00 p.m. and I didn't go in until 3:30 or so. That is a long time to wait especially since I hadn't eaten anything since 12:00 p.m. the previous day, but staff kept me updated."				
Staff Professionalism and Courtesy	 Mostly positive Professionalism, kindness, and friendliness of staff 	"Your staff gave me excellent care - and made me about as comfortable as could be, everyone was friendly, kind and caring."				
Reception and Check-in Process		"There was no receptionist at check in waited 10-15 minutes then looked for someone."				

Quantitative Data

Perioperative Services	April 2023- June 2023 (FY23 Q4)	July 2023- September 2023 (FY24 Q1)	October 2023- December 2023 (FY24 Q2)	January 2024- March 2024 (FY24 Q3)
Outpatient Surgical Cases	3,681	3,488	3,955	3,486
Number of Patient with delays	1,350	1,275	1,401	1,308

FY24 Perioperative Services	Q1 July 2023- September 2023 (mean score)	Natl rank	UHC rank	N	Q2 October 2023- December 2023 (mean score)		UHC rank	N	Q3 January 2024- March 2024 (mean score)	rank	UHC ranl	N	Q4 April 2024- June 2024 (mean score)		UHC rank	N
"degree to which you were informed of any delays"	88.9	33	24	172		33	16	186	88.7	33	25	192	88.8	34	19	280

Conclusion

This quality improvement initiative demonstrated the importance of clear, consistent communication in managing patient expectations during perioperative delays, and maintaining a positive patient experience.³ Further, consumer's *perception* of interactions shape the reality of the degree to which they were notified of delays.² Future efforts will focus on refining these processes and enhancing patient-centered communication strategies by exploring the option of automated SMS notification.

Perioperative nurses play a key role in improving patient communication. Continued quality improvement initiatives can help standardize practices and better utilize technology to enhance the patient experience. Telemedicine and mobile health applications have reported high satisfaction rates from both patients and surgeons and shown a positive effect on patient satisfaction. ¹



References

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