

## **We Are Going Home: Preop Delays after Dark**

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**Introduction:** The Perioperative Services consist of seven PACU units that consolidate resources and staffing during the evening.

**Identification of the Problem:** The communication gaps after hours between the Operating Room (OR) Command Center and Preoperative unit have led to increased complaints and staff dissatisfaction. These issues contribute to surgical delays, negatively affecting staff satisfaction, operational efficiency, and resource utilization.

**QI Question/Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this project is to decrease surgical delays after 6:00pm through a test of change in Preop between October 2024 and April 2025.

**Methods:** A new process was implemented in the department to improve coordination and reduce delays. At 4pm, PACU triage calls the OR command center to determine how many preop patients remain scheduled after 6pm. PACU triage then informs the affected preop units to review those cases and ensure OR readiness. A preop nurse is assigned to cover preop between 6pm to 8pm across all units, until the evening staff arrives. During this time, the OR Command Center calls PACU triage directly for any patients to coordinate care. Additionally, data was collected to identify the cause of the delays.

### **Outcomes/Results:**

- 10/1/24 -11/30/24 – 1 delay
- 12/1/24 – 1/31/25 – 3 delays
- 2/1/ 25 – 3/31/25 – 3 delays

**Discussion:** Pre-intervention data was collected for 1 month from October to November 2023 for a total of 11 delays. Post intervention data was collected between October 2024 and April 2025 for a total of 7 delays over 7 months

**Conclusion:** With the decrease of reported delays over an extended period of time, our test of change made notable progress in improving the timely transfer of patients to the OR.

**Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research:** Structured communication between OR Command Center and PACU triage during afterhours encourages better coordination and effective use of resource. Ensuring patient chart readiness decreases potential delays and unused OR time. Thus, effective communication was key in maximizing the use of resources and time and enhancing staff satisfaction.