Prioritizing Patient Flow
Utilizing a Discharge Center
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PROBLEM
- A discharge center was opened prior to establishing a defined process to guide staff in utilizing the center.
- Immediately after opening, criteria for the types of patients that should be assigned to the center was needed.
- Nursing staff voiced a knowledge deficit in relation to goals for use of the discharge center.

SETTING
An 800 bed acute care facility servicing a diverse community in the southeastern United States

THEMES IDENTIFIED IMPACTING PROCESS
- Patient throughput efficiency
- Overcrowded emergency rooms
- Decreased Length of Stay
- Patient satisfaction

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
- Team meetings with key stakeholders
- Collaboration with unit based care progression nurses
- Development of newsletter with staff regarding outcomes
- Team partnership with Risk Management Department to develop method of communicating outcomes with staff
- Development of education tool in the Electronic Health Record
- Planned development of patient education video detailing the discharge center

PLANNED EVALUATION METHODS
- Survey the project team about the process for developing the plan to address the identified problem
- Survey in-patient nursing staff regarding utilization of the discharge center
- Review the trend data of patient volume of clients since the project implementation

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE
- In-patient nursing staff benefit from understanding the two-fold purpose of the discharge center
- Involving in-patient and unit based nurses (care progression nurses) helps improve adherence and staff accountability for the outlined process
- Patient education about the discharge process must start early during hospital stay
- Collaboration with multiple members of the health care team improves the patient experience

RESEARCH QUESTION
Will the development of a defined process for utilizing the discharge center facilitate appropriate assignment of patients to the discharge center?

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