Improving Patient Flow Process From the PACU to the Inpatient Unit Post-Surgical Procedure

Helen S. Kane, MSN, MBA, RN, CCRN  
*Thomas Jefferson University Hospital Methodist Division, Philadelphia, PA, USA*

Christina Murphy, RN, BSN  
*Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Methodist Campus, Philadelphia, PA, USA*

Linda Wilson, PhD, RN, CPAN, CAPA, BC, CNE, CNEcl, CHSE-A, FASPAN, ANEF, FAAN  
*College of Nursing and Health Professions, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, USA*

Patient flow processes can be a challenge in today’s healthcare environment. Timely processes and RN satisfaction with the patient flow process are major factors for success in a Magnet designated hospital. **Purpose:** The purpose of this evidence-based project was to improve the patient flow process from the Post Anesthesia Care Unit to the inpatient unit post operating room procedure.

**Methods:** A project team with representatives from the post anesthesia care unit (PACU) and the inpatient unit was developed to design a new patient flow process to improve communication and timeliness of patient transfer. The new re-designed patient flow process includes: 1) increased communication using campus wide secure text messaging using state of the art smart phones already implemented house wide; and 2) a team communication process to ensure timely report and safe transfer of the patient from the post anesthesia care unit to the inpatient unit. The project goal is 30 minutes from report to arrival on the inpatient unit. Progress status reports are generated from an electronic main frame system and additional calculations for analysis.

**Results:** The new patient flow process was implemented for approximately a six-month period and was well received. There was an increased collegial collaboration as evidenced by reports, graphs and meetings with unit representatives. The project facilitator was a neutral person and did not work in either the post anesthesia care unit or the inpatient unit. The RN report time to arrival on the unit was decreased to an average of 36 minutes.

**Conclusion:** The patient flow process will continue as the standard of practice for the patient flow process from PACU to the inpatient unit post-surgical procedure. Information from the project was shared at the unit council meetings as part of the shared governance process. Information was also shared in daily unit huddles and the unit’s newsletter. This session will also present challenges, successes and future plans.

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References:

First Author
Helen S. Kane, MSN, MBA, RN, CCRN
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital Methodist Division
Clinical Nurse Specialist
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
USA

Author Summary: H. Lynn Kane is a Clinical Nurse Specialist at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital Methodist Division. Lynn has been a Certified Critical Care Nurse since 1979. Ms Kane has extensive critical care, trauma, perioperative, perianesthesia and administrative experience. Ms Kane is Past President of the South Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses 1986-87. Ms Kane is the current President of the New Jersey Perianesthesia Nurses Association.

Second Author
Christina Murphy, RN, BSN
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Methodist Campus
Unit Based Council Leader and Staff Nurse
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
USA

Author Summary: Christina Murphy RN, BSN is a Unit Based Council Leader and a Staff Nurse on Unit B3 Surgical at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital Methodist Campus in Philadelphia Pennsylvania.

Third Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author
Author Summary: Dr Wilson is the Assistant Dean for Continuing Education, Simulation and Events & Clinical Professor at Drexel University College of Nursing and Health Professions in Philadelphia. She is a dual Certified Nurse Educator and is dual Certified in Simulation and PeriAnesthesia nursing. Dr Wilson has extensive experience in simulation, debriefing, nursing education and nursing technology.