



Background

- Discharge Planning is “an essential, yet complex element of quality patient care and one of the most patient-centered functions that emergency nurses provide” (ENA Position Statement, 2019).
- Patient misunderstanding of discharge instructions adversely affects patient healthcare compliance.
- At our ED, patient experience scores for discharge instructions varied widely and were lower than desired, suggesting that our practices were not standardized, and post discharge compliance may have been less than optimal.
- We are a 12-bed stand-alone ED in a suburban area that serves an average of 34,000 patients annually and is one of seven EDs that comprise the largest healthcare system in the county.

Purpose

- With the aim of improving our patient/family experience (PFE) discharge to >90th percentile ranking for “Excellent” scores, we sought to develop and implement a standard, evidence-based nursing discharge process.

Methods

Process Development

- A standard process was developed based on a 4-stage best practice for communicating with patients at discharge:

Prepare

- All patient activities (e.g., removing IV, vital signs) completed
- Discharge instructions are highlighted (Key Information) and checked for accuracy/completeness

Review

- RN position at patient eye level while delivering verbal instructions
- RN reviews highlighted discharge instructions with patient

Advocate

- RN advocates for patient by educating on non-pharmacological interventions for home care after discharge
- Discussion regarding prescription assistance is given if needed

Confirm

- RN confirms patient understanding and ensures patient is given the opportunity to ask questions prior to signing discharge attestation

Implementation

- ❖ The 39 RNs who discharge patients were required to complete online training about the new process and sign an attestation of completion. There was a 30-day deadline.

- ❖ The new process went live immediately after the deadline on **March 1, 2019**.

Sustainability Plan

- ❖ The standard discharge process was added to our yearly competency validation requirement.

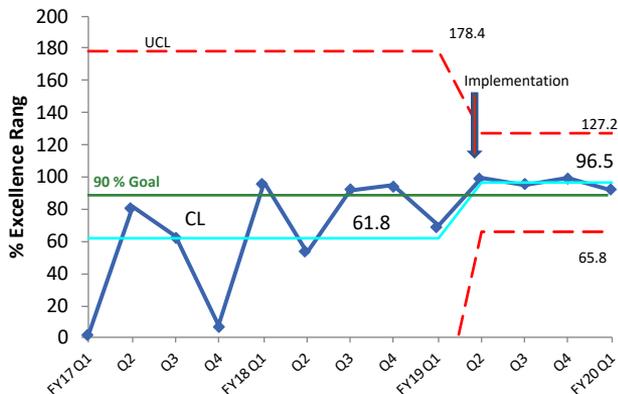
Analysis

- ❖ Pre/post design with trend analysis of percentile ranking of Excellent scores for PFE discharge instructions. Scores were collected by a third party and averaged 50 patients per quarter (range 49-51).

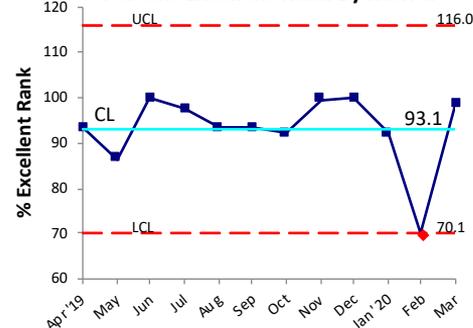
- **RESULTS:** Quarterly percent Excellent rank, which averaged 61.8 pre-implementation, improved to 96.5 post implementation. Except for Feb 2020, our average monthly rank post implementation was 93.1 and shows a stable process except for Feb 2020.

Results

Quarterly Percent Excellent Rank for PFE Discharge Instruction Scores



Post Implementation PFE Discharge Instruction Percent Excellent Rank By Month



Discussion

- The Standard ED Discharge Process was adopted for daily practice in our setting.
- The Standard Discharge Process is being disseminated to the 6 additional EDs in our health system.
- We will continue to monitor the process using patient experience scores and competency at annual evaluation competencies.

Implications for Emergency Nursing Practice

- Implementation of a standardized ED discharge process can improve the patient experience with discharge as evidenced by increased scores.
- Further study is recommended to evaluate if the increased patient experience discharge scores achieved with this process improvement also improves patient outcomes such as care compliance, return ED visits, and readmission rates.