

Know the Game Plan: HUDDLE!
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Problem: Failures in communication among health care teams result in detrimental patient health outcomes, appointment inaccessibility and patient dissatisfaction.

Evidence: Studies have revealed that poor communication among health care providers has resulted in medical errors, and poor patient care outcomes. Programs such as the TeamSTEPPS and Advanced Care Access (ACA) have proven to reduce clinical errors, improve patient outcomes, patient satisfaction and offer patients better access to care. The Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) clinic staff identified fragmented communication as a variable that resulted in missed opportunities. Improving communication and collaboration within the integrated health care team will enhance patient and staff satisfaction.

Strategy: Evidence suggests that endorsing a team approach would optimize quality and safety in patient care outcomes. The GEM clinic staff received training and education in TeamSTEPPS and ACA. Allotting time for the medical, nursing and medical administration staff to come together in a Huddle, prior to the start of the morning and afternoon clinic allows issues such as appointment availability, or critical patient issues, to be discussed.

Practice change: Once the training and education occurred, the GEM clinic staff Huddles twice a day, enhancing the collaborative effort among the staff,.

Evaluation: The measured outcomes include: clinic utilization, number of patients seen in other locations (such as ER), capacity in clinic since the start of Huddling, patient satisfaction with accessibility and staff satisfaction with new communication tool.

Results: Since the initiation of the Huddle, higher rates of clinic utilization, higher number of capacity, enhanced situation monitoring, and communication among team members have all increased.

Recommendations: Identify barriers that are affecting patient care outcomes, such as communication among team members, clinic flow process, accessibility of services to patient and satisfaction of patients and staff. Customize training and education for unit specific needs and integrate existing initiatives.

Bibliography: King, H., Durkee, R., Harmon, M., Salisbury, M. (2007) TeamSTEPPS: teamwork principles for quality and safety. Developed by Department of Defense Patient Safety Program and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Summer Institute of Evidence-Based Practice 2007.

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