

Empower Your Staff: Improved Teamwork and Safety Through Implementing Specialty Leads in an Ambulatory Surgical Center

Tabitha Hoffman, MSN, RN, RNC-OB; Kayla Miller, MEd, BSN, RN; Jane Holsinger, BSN, RN, CNOR; and Cathy Hartzell, BSN, RN, MedSurg-BC
WellSpan Apple Hill Surgical Center, York, Pennsylvania

Statement of Problem

The previous process of one designated charge nurse being responsible for the preparation and procurement of special equipment and supplies was not sustainable. The specialty services provided to our community has expanded, in addition to the need for more equipment, supplies and education for our staff. Therefore, the growing need to create Specialty Leads for each service was identified.

Description of team

Specialty Leads consist of two intraoperative RNs who volunteered for the role for a specialty service. In each specialty team, one RN was considered the primary lead. These RNs worked together, in addition to collaborating with the nurse manager, surgeons/providers, and supply chain personnel.

Preparation and planning

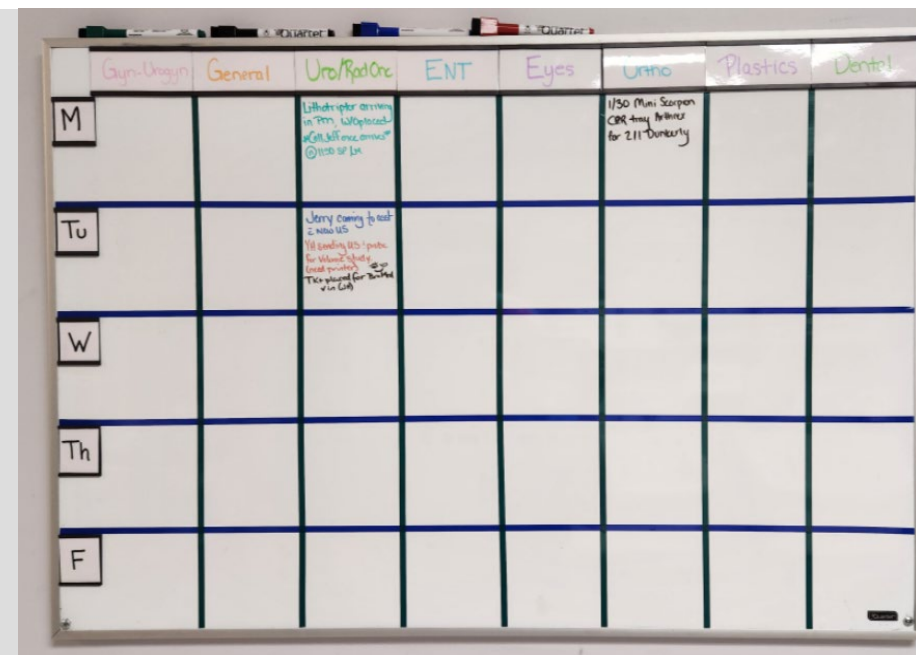
The intraoperative RNs who volunteered were then assigned the primary or secondary lead for their desired specialty. A total of ten specialty teams were created to meet the needs of the facility. A detailed list of objectives was provided to every specialty team to provide guidance of tasks and expectations.

Assessment

The operating room has one of the highest risks of medical errors due to the high degree of coordination, technical equipment, complex/vulnerable populations of patients, and a hazardous environment². This atmosphere offers a unique opportunity to explore concepts of teams and teamwork. This past year, the management team at our ambulatory surgical center identified the need to distinguish staff leads for each specialty to improve communication, teamwork, staff preparedness and ensure proper supplies and equipment are ready for day of surgery. We anticipated through implementation, a notable improvement in team member satisfaction, staff engagement, while improving safe patient care.

Implementation

All intraoperative staff were informed of the RNs leads for each specialty. A Specialty Lead role was added to the daily staffing schedule in order to allot time for completion of tasks. Specialty Lead RNs utilize their time to review cases and plan ahead for all surgeries, ensuring all special needs are addressed. Any identified needs are communicated by the RN leads to leadership and staff including Central Sterile Processing via a specialty teams communication board. No monetary compensation was provided to the RNs that took on these positions. However, this additional responsibility is utilized to meet criteria for their yearly evaluation and clinical ladder.



Specialty Teams

- Dental
- ENT
- Endoscopy
- General
- Gynecology/
Uro-gynecology
- Ophthalmology
- Plastics
- Podiatry/Ortho
- Radiation Oncology
- Urology

Team Objectives

- Preference card updates
- Onboarding new services/products
- Communication/collaboration with system departments
- Procuring supplies/instrumentation/equipment needs
- Education for all phases of care
- Stewardship and inventory awareness



Detailed List of
Objectives for
Specialty Leads



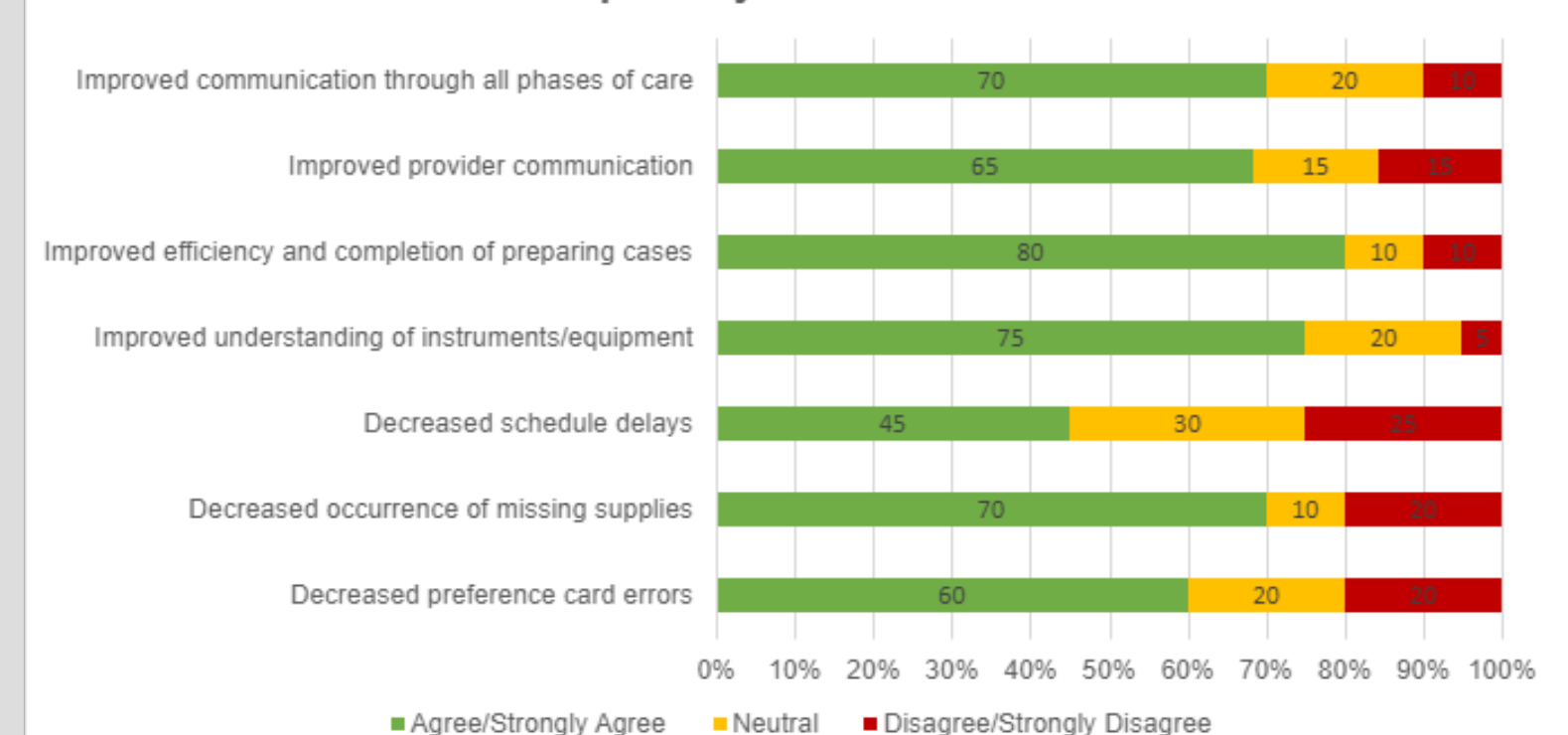
Expanding leads
to Preop/Pacu &
CSP

Outcome

Staff engagement improved by 7%, as evidenced through an electronic survey platform that allows organizations to solicit input, hear staff concerns, and translate feedback in a timely, effective manner. Additionally, a second survey was distributed to OR staff where 20/28 (71%) of the staff completed this survey. Detailed results are noted below. Significant findings that occurred through the empowerment of the RN Specialty Leads, were as follows:

- Improvement of efficiency and completion of pulling equipment, instruments, and supplies
- Improved communication throughout all phases of care, preop, intraop and post-op

OR Specialty Teams Measures



Implication in Perioperative Nursing

Specialty teams can be used to focus on team consistency, an ever-important key to operating room communication and patient safety¹. Specialty team RN leads' collaboration throughout perioperative services decreases wasted time and materials, yielding a more efficient OR with more engaged staff.

References

1. How to build surgeon-specific teams (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.aorn.org/about-aorn-aorn-newsroom-periop-today-newsletter/2019/2019-articles/surgeon-specific-teams>
2. Teunissen, C., Burrell, B., Maskill, V. (2019). Effective surgical teams: An integrative literature review. *SAGE Journals*, 42, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193945919834896>