**Project Aims**

1. To reduce the amount of time patients’ wait to have their call lights answered on 5 NW, a General Surgery Unit.
2. Improve our Press Ganey score on the question “Promptness/Response to Call”.

**Background**

Patient satisfaction is important because it reflects the patients’ perception of the quality of care they receive and the competence of the care providers. It can be very complex and take a lot of effort to improve. Implementing best practices makes this process easier, creating success more quickly.

One of the best practices identified was to reduce the wait time that patients’ experience. “Frustration over delays in answering call lights is one of the most frequent comments made by patients.”

After reviewing the unit’s Press Ganey scores from the previous year, our Patient Satisfaction Committee, which is composed of staff RN’s and management, identified areas with the most opportunity for improvement.

**Best Practice**

**Press Ganey’s Inpatient Solutions Starter**

Two ideas that stood out:

1. Institute global standards for response time. Empower anyone to respond to the call light while making it an expectation/standard that everyone is responsible for response to a call.
2. Incentivize, reward and recognize desired behaviors like response time.

**Improvement Strategy**

1. Our Patient Satisfaction Committee decided to implement a Lean small test of change to increase our patient satisfaction scores for “Promptness/Response to Call”. We worked with Bio Med to learn how to trace all patient call lights and the amount of time call lights remained on before a staff member responded. We then retrieved data that showed in September 2009, 1,158 out of 6,300 call lights (18%) had a response time of >5 minutes.

2. The Committee reviewed the Solutions Guide in Press Ganey: Making It Right: Healthcare Service Recovery Tools, Techniques, and Best Practices to determine best practices to reduce response time. Improvement solutions included:
   - Institute global standards for call light response time
   - Empower all staff members to answer call lights / making it an expectation
   - Incentivize, reward and recognize desired behaviors like response time

3. Using Press Ganey best practices, the Patient Satisfaction Committee developed and rolled out a program to increase our promptness in answering call lights. This plan included educating staff, promoting teamwork among the staff, and offering staff small incentives. Members of the Patient Satisfaction Committee served as champions for the program.

4. In October 2009, a competition was started where call lights that remained on for >5 minutes were counted as a ‘missed opportunity of promptness’.

The set goal was to have <2 “missed opportunities” on night shift and <5 on day shift. If this goal was reached, the staff on that shift received a small reward.

5. Reports are now generated twice daily to measure how many call lights were placed and how long the call lights were on. This data is recorded and displayed at the nurses station for all staff members to view. Collective data is distributed monthly.

**Results**

**Patient Satisfaction Results**

- For July/August/September 2009, we were in the 57th percentile for “Promptness/Response to Call”.
- After the competition began, we improved to the 95th percentile for October/November/December 2009.

**Call Light Response Times**

- In September 2009 (baseline), 1,158 out of 6,300 (18.4%) call lights had a response time >5 minutes.
- By December 2009 (2 months after we began), 640 of 6,618 (10.4%) call lights had a response time >5 minutes.
- The data from February 2010 validated that the project had likely resulted in a permanent culture change with only 440 of 6,556 (6.7%) call lights with a response time >5 minutes.

**Patient Comments**

- “I couldn’t have asked for better service. Whenever I pushed my call light, someone was there right away. I felt like I was the only patient on the floor.” (Discharge phone call)
- “I’ve never had such a quick response at night from nursing staff. Susan was there within minutes after I called that my IV alarm had rung. Cori was right there when I rang several times that night. They were terrific!” (Thank you note)

**Changes in Culture**

- RN’s and CNA’s attend to call lights outside of their patient assignments. Unit clerks assist patients with non-clinical requests to reduce the call light response time.
- Staff members regularly discuss the results and enjoy the incentives achieved.

**References**