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Improving Inpatient Access Through the Reduction of Intra-unit Transfer Times.

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Improving Inpatient Access Through the Reduction of Intra-unit Transfer Times

Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

POSTER OBJECTIVE

Detail strategies to improve capacity in the acute health care setting through efficient intra-unit transfers.

BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

Hospital admissions continue to be on the rise, forcing hospitals to address capacity issues. Lehigh Valley Health Network hospitals noted opportunities to impact patient flow through improvements in intra-unit transfer times; in particular, there was no standard work associated with these transfers.

INTERVENTIONS

- Formation of intraprofessional process improvement team
  - Nursing – clinical nurses and managers
  - Transport
  - Bed Management
  - Lean Coach
- Development of Standard Work Algorithm
- Ongoing, real-time monitoring
- Development of electronic reporting/communication mechanisms, tied to electronic medical record
- Establishment of intra-unit transfer times as a metric at daily hospital-wide Leadership Huddle

References:

1. Johnson D., Schmidt U., Bittner E., Christensen B., Levi R., & Pino R. (2013). Delay of transfer from the intensive care unit: A prospective observational study of incidence, causes, and financial impact. *Critical Care*, 17(4), 1-5.
2. Reddy A., Pappas R., Suri S., Whinney C., Yerian L., & Guxman J. (2015). Impact of throughput optimization on intensive care unit occupancy. American Journal of Medical Quality, 30(4), 317-322.

INTRA-UNIT TRANSFER TIME

"the time it takes from when a patient is assigned a clean bed on another unit until that patient occupies that bed."

STANDARD WORK FOR INTRA-UNIT TRANSFERS

1. Provider writes transfer order
2. Bed Management staff assigns bed
3. Bed Management staff notifies sending and receiving unit of bed via Ascom phone
4. Sending unit AP/designee places a transport request within 15 minutes of notification by Bed Management Staff
5. Transporter is assigned electronically based on priority
6. The patient's assigned nurse calls the receiving unit patient's nurse* with report (*if not available, report is given to another RN, the Churn nurse, PCC or Director)
7. Transporter arrives for patient. If transporter does not arrive w/in 30 minutes of request, sending unit staff transports patient
8. Transporter, with help as needed by unit staff, places patient in assigned bed on new unit
9. AP on receiving unit transfers patient into the EPIC Census

INTRA-UNIT TRANSFER HUDDLE METRIC

RESULTS

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Development of the standard work algorithm
- Accountability through inclusion of an incentivized goal for management and clinical nurses to decrease intra-unit transfer time, evaluated at the time of annual performance appraisal.
- Representatives of all impacted roles on the Process Improvement Team
- Enhancement of transport role to address retention issues
- System improvements related to transport notification and assignments

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