Implementing Mobile Technology to Enhance Communication Between Health Care Providers and Patient’s Families

Daniel Patzek RN, BSN
Lehigh Valley Health Network, daniel.patzek@lvhn.org

Diane Kocsis MSN, RN
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Diane.Kocsis@lvhn.org

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlyworks.lvhn.org/patient-care-services-nursing

Published In/Presented At
Implementing Mobile Technology to Enhance Communication Between Health Care Providers and Patient’s Families

Daniel Patzek, BSN, RN-BC and Diane Kocsis, MSN, RN
Clinical Informatics, Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pa.

OBJECTIVE
• Discuss successful implementation of the mobile application, ‘EASE®’ in surgical and inpatient hospital settings to strengthen the communication between health care providers and patient’s families.

BACKGROUND
• Enhancing communication reduces anxiety levels for hospitalized patients and families.
• Families desired an accessible and convenient method to connect with staff during their loved one’s hospitalization.
• Mobile technology applications such as ‘EASE®’ allow:
  n Family members to receive patient care updates
  n Caregivers to send notifications to designated with a smart phone
  n Instantaneous feedback and connection

IMPLEMENTATION
Phase 1:
• Began in operating room (OR)
  n Initially focused on specialty areas
  n Used in OR cases > one hour
• Scripts developed based on specialty
• Guided nurses on family communication
• Devices were:
  n Evaluated
  n Deployed
  n Programmed
• Electronic education completed by the vendor
• Clinical informatics provided ‘at the elbow’ support

Phase 2:
• Successful project roll-out
• Expanded technology to procedural units and select intensive care units (ICUs)
  n ‘Breathing tube has been removed’
  n ‘Sitting up in a chair for the first time’
  n ‘Eating breakfast’
  n ‘Taking the first walk of the day’
  n ‘Ready to be transferred to a step-down unit’
  n ‘Procedure ongoing’
  n ‘Please return to waiting area to meet the physician’

Future State:
• Plan to implement in NICU, PCU and all adult critical care units
• Inpatient units – send text messages only; nurses exclusively send messages

RESULTS
86,859 MESSAGES SENT
50–232 STATES – AREA CODES RECEIVED MESSAGES

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK
Patient Family Comments
“Informative, comforting, lessens your anxiety, and you can communicate with other family members who can’t be here.”
“This was the easiest way to keep the whole family informed without everyone being here. Was very easy to use. Thank you.”
“Gave us peace of mind while we waited! Every hospital should offer this!”
“This is the first time we experienced EASE® and love it. Every facility should have this system. It lets family know the patient’s progress every step of the way. Great!!!”
“Awesome! Really put my mind at ‘ease’ during such an important procedure! Thank you!!”

BARRIERS
• Risk management - review and approve workflow and policies
• Nurse buy-in for additional tasks
• Surgeon/provider resistance for sharing updates

KEY TAKE-AWAYS
• Intra-collaborative participation is essential
• Open communication with the vendor provides an enhanced product for patients and families

REFERENCE