

Nurse-Patient Communication Enhanced in AACN CSI Academy Projects

Team project results include improved parent satisfaction scores, decreased lengths of stay and shorter shift-to-shift report times.

Patient-centered care hinges on effective communication. Studies confirm patients and their families view communication with the healthcare team as a key element of quality care.

Yet, patients and their families are often dissatisfied with the quantity and quality of communication with team members. Since nurses provide the majority of bedside care, they have more opportunities than other clinicians to improve communication with patients and families.

Two teams of nurses participating in AACN Clinical Scene Investigator (CSI) Academy — a 16-month hospital-based nurse leadership and innovation training program — reported results from their capstone projects to improve patient-family communication.

Opportunities for improvement identified by a team from WakeMed Raleigh Hospital in North Carolina included greater consistency in handoffs between shifts, easing family anxiety while awaiting physicians' rounds and increased clarity about the healthcare plan. The team concentrated on nursing process improvements by addressing points such as missed daily orders, missing or incorrect medications, change of shift reporting taking too long and limited progress on the daily care plan.

Team members created Bedside Team Check — a checklist to ensure staff, patient and family communication needs are met — as the project's cornerstone. It proved challenging to



collect data about intangibles such as improved communication, but introduction of Bedside Team Check and associated staff education in the ICU resulted in positive outcomes that include:

- More discussions about the care plan
- Shorter report times because the checklist was consistently used among shifts
- Fewer family concerns communicated to hospital management

The team at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis focused on improved family satisfaction in the pediatric ICU (PICU) while decreasing length of stay and associated costs through family participation in goal-directed care.

After benchmarking strategies with a high-scoring sister unit, the team revised the communications component of its staff education program and trained more than 180 nurses and members of the interdisciplinary care team. As a result, the Riley team:

- Contributed to decreasing PICU length of stay by 0.5 day — with anticipated savings of up to \$1.8 million per year
- Improved parent satisfaction scores by 12 to 20 percent

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