Let the Games Begin: Communicate and Update to Make the ED Visit Great!

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Introduction
High quality communication between medical teams and patients and families are critical to patient-centered care. The Emergency Department (ED) environment presents challenges including high turnover, multiple staff members, and a busy, unpredictable environment. Families may have a limited understanding of their plan of care and “what's next” during their ED stay. Whiteboards, also known as communication boards, may play a role in improving communication between the family and clinical team, facilitating high-quality care, and improving patient-family satisfaction.

Aim
50% of Communication Boards in a pediatric emergency department will list a patient’s plan of care by end of FY19.

Details of Innovation
A REDCap survey tool was created to capture:

- Presence of names of:
  o Attending
  o Front Line Order Clinician (FLOC)
  o RN
- Accuracy of these names
- Plan of care listed
- Presence of marker

Since its inception in December 2017, multiple PDSA cycles have been performed. The intervention that produced the greatest improvement was The Communication Board Challenge.

- Random unannounced observations were performed during Feb 2019
- The ED has 4 care teams. The team with the greatest percentage of boards with plan of care completed won candy

A daily email was sent to the department congratulating all members of the winning team - Patient Care Associates (registrars), Nurses, ED Techs (EMTs), APPs, Residents, Fellows, and Attendings

Outcome
- Percentage of Communication Boards with Plan of Care listed increased from 25% in Aug 2018 to 59% in Feb 2019, and continued through March 2019 at 66%

- ED Press Ganey (PG) survey scores were also highest during the month of the Communication Board Challenge
  - 55.6% of families gave very good ratings for “informed about delays” in Feb 2019
  - 79.8% of families gave very good ratings for nurse and doctor “informed them of their child’s treatment” in Feb 2019

Conclusions
- A friendly competition between ED Teams was associated with improvement in utilization of Communication Boards
  - This occurred during months with high patient volumes and high acuity

- There was an associated increase in several patient-family satisfaction metrics

- Rewarding the ED Team with the highest percentage of Plan of Care engaged staff and improved morale in the ED, while also improving the patient-family experience

- Improved communication can
  - Decrease parental and patient anxiety
  - Improve patient-family satisfaction
  - Provide better outcomes for patients, families, and staff

- Updating Communication Boards can increase communication amongst members of the medical team, increasing team effectiveness and efficiency

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References

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Background:

Communication between medical teams and patients/families is a critical element in patient-centered care. The Emergency Department (ED) environment presents particular challenges including high turnover, multiple staff members, and a busy unpredictable environment. Existing data suggests that families may have limited understanding of the plan of care and “what's next” during their ED stay. Whiteboards, also known as communication boards, may play a role in improving communication between the family and clinical team, facilitating high-quality care, and improving patient/family satisfaction.

Aim:

50% of Communication Boards in an urban pediatric emergency department will list a patient's plan of care by end of FY19.

Details of Innovation:

In a Level-1 Trauma pediatric emergency department, a RedCap survey tool was created to capture names of Attending, Front Line Order Clinician (FLOC), and RN, accuracy of those names, plan of care, and presence of marker on communication board. Since its inception in December 2017, multiple PDSA cycles have been performed including disseminating mini whiteboard markers to staff, updating Resident Orientation Guides, changing communication board location, orienting families to communication boards, partnering with environmental services to clean boards, creating plan of care scripting, and organizing a month-long Communication Board challenge between ED teams.

Outcome:

During FY19 the percentage of Communication Boards with Plan of Care listed had increased from 25% in August 2018 to 66% in March 2019. The Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle that exhibited the greatest amount of change was “The Communication Board Challenge;” increasing Plan of Care from 39% in January 2019 to 59% in February 2019, continuing through March at 66%. Comparing this data with ED Press Ganey (PG) survey data, 55.6% of families gave very good ratings for “informed about delays” in February 2019, the highest score given during the fiscal year. 79.8% of families gave very good ratings for nurse and doctor “informed them of their child’s treatment”, also the highest score for FY19.

Conclusions

A friendly competition between ED Teams during the Communication Board Challenge was associated with significant improvement in completion of Plan of Care on Communication Boards. This challenge was also undertaken during a month with high patient volumes and high acuity. There was an associated increase in several patient-family satisfaction metrics that may be partially attributed to this effort. Rewarding the ED Team with the highest percentage of Plan of Care completed with sweet treats engaged staff and improved morale in the ED, while also improving the patient-family experience.

It is hoped that improved communication will decrease parental and patient anxiety, improve patient-family satisfaction, and provide better outcomes for patients, families, and staff. Updating Communication Boards can also increase communication amongst members of the medical team, increasing team effectiveness and efficiency. Friendly-competition techniques were associated with the largest improvement in completion rates. This technique could be applied to other units and hospitals looking to develop communication board use to enhance communication and improve the patient-family experience.