

# Everyone Will Have A Voice: Improving Staff Communication

## The Problem

Working relationships between registered nurses (RN's) and patient care technicians (PCT's) on a 44 bed medical-surgical inpatient unit had become characterized by poor communication and ineffective teamwork practices. It was believed that a lack of teamwork between these groups had the potential to negatively impact patient care and safety. Additionally, RN's and PCT's expressed job dissatisfaction as a result of these troubled relationships, further jeopardizing the goal of providing excellence in care. Unit leadership and a core group of frontline staff identified this problem as one requiring immediate intervention.

## Aim

The purpose of this quality improvement project was to improve communication and working relationships between RN's and PCT's.

## The Team

- Gina Murphy BSN, RN, Nurse Manager, Reisman 12
- Lauren Call BSN, RN, Clinical Nurse IV, Reisman 12, Unit Based Council Tri-Chair
- Claire Cruz BSN, RN, Clinical Nurse II, Reisman 12
- Katherine Willetts BSN, RN, Clinical Nurse IV, Reisman 12, Unit Based Council Tri-Chair
- Maria Ramos PCT, Reisman 12, Unit Based Council Tri-Chair
- Reisman 12 Unit Based Council Members

## The Interventions

- Implemented a Unit Based Council comprised of RN'S and PCTs working on Reisman 12
  - Created a venue for RN's and PCT's to express concerns, develop working solutions to problems, and devise strategies to improve communication and patient care

- Unit Based Council developed and implemented a 12 week pilot May 2014-August 2014
  - New RN-PCT assignment process
  - New standardized expectations for change of shift report

## Progress to Date

- Feedback from RN's and PCT's at follow-up Unit Based Council meetings revealed an increase in:
  - Satisfaction with communication
  - Feeling of teamwork
  - Receiving more timely and higher quality change of shift report
- Staff empowerment and engagement
  - Voice of the PCT was brought forward
- Staff were given the opportunity for shared decision-making in activities that directly affected their day to day work
- Positive feedback from patients received by nurse manager on leadership rounds

## Lessons Learned

- Nurse leaders and frontline staff can partner in taking the initiative to find creative solutions to improving RN and PCT relationships, ensuring that patients are receiving the best care they deserve
- Collaboration and ongoing communication between unit leadership and frontline staff were crucial to the success of this project

## Next Steps

- The results of this quality improvement project have provided the foundation for future nursing research aimed at exploring differences in mutual accountability levels between RN's and PCT's in regards to change of shift report.

