

Whiteboards: A Patient and Family Communication Tool

The Problem

Patient-centered communication is a priority at BIDMC and among hospitals across the country, and is emphasized by the Joint Commission encouraging hospitals to adopt practices that promote improved communication and engage patients in their care. Whiteboards in patients' room can be an excellent communication tool between patients, families and providers. At BIDMC, whiteboards on the units were inconsistent. Each looked different and included different information. Use of the whiteboards by staff was variable, and some whiteboards were in very bad shape making it difficult for staff to use and patients to read.

Aim/Goal

Our goal was to create a consistent whiteboard template to be used on most units, which included key elements to improve communication and understanding between patients, families and providers, and to roll it out to the med-surg units starting on West Campus.

The Team

Anissa Bernardo, Patient Satisfaction Improvement Coordinator
 Kristina Ciceleva, Media Services
 Deb McGrath, Operations Administrator
 John Ryan, RN, Nurse Manager
 Kim Sulmonte, RN, MHA, Associate Chief Nurse, Quality and Safety
 Jane Wandel, Consultant

The Interventions

- Talked with patients, family members and staff to identify the key information that is most helpful to have posted on a whiteboard in the room.
- Worked with Media Services to create a template.
- Contracted with an outside vendor to create the actual whiteboards.
- Piloted the boards on Farr 9, and made adjustments.
- Worked with Operations Administrators to roll out the whiteboards to the West Campus units.

The Results/Progress to Date

The new templated whiteboards have been rolled out to all med-surg units on West Campus (both the Farr Building and Clinical Center).

Farr 2 Front Desk Phone 617-632-8710		Room 225 Room Phone 617-632-1844
Nurse Manager Phone		
My Care Team		
Others	My Contact Person	
Plan of Care		
My Questions		

To Order Meals Call 7-3663

Pain Scale

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NO PAIN		MILD PAIN		MODERATE PAIN		SEVERE PAIN		WORST PAIN		

Lessons Learned

- Different size boards are needed for different rooms. The template must be adjusted as needed.
- Maximize the space available for the whiteboard in the room to make it more visible to patients.
- A new whiteboard does not mean all fields will be filled in daily!

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Roll out the whiteboards on East Campus in FY13.
- Review audits on the units using the templated whiteboards to determine what is/is not being filled in. Work with staff to create a plan to ensure the whiteboard is completed fully on a daily basis.