

## **Abstract**

Effective perioperative patient handoff communication in the ambulatory surgery arena is vital to patient safety. Communication errors are the most common cause of medical errors and are essentially preventable. The purpose of this performance improvement project was to design and implement an ambulatory surgery center specific perioperative patient safety communication guideline to follow the patient through all phases of care. The guideline will improve handoff accuracy and completeness, improve outcomes, and reduce errors. The theoretical framework this project was based on was Rosswurm and Larrabee's Model for Change to Evidenced-Based Practice. This model provides a systematic process for change with evidenced-based practice. Pre and post implementation medication and surgical site errors were measured as well as nurses' compliance and attitudes regarding the use of the patient safety guideline. There were no medication errors or surgical site errors noted during the implementation of this project. The pre-operative nurses used the guideline 81% of the time and transferred an average of three critical elements out of four. The circulating nurses used the guideline 26% of the time and transferred an average of five out of seven critical elements. The certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) used the guideline 70% of the time transferring an average of six out of seven elements.