**Captured Audience:**

**Innovative Strategies for Patient, Staff and Community Education**

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**Introduction**

The ANA Nursing Scope and Standards state “The registered nurse employs strategies to promote health and a safe environment.” (Standard 5b). Patient education is also required by regulatory agencies and is a necessary component of relationship based care. The educational strategy incorporated learning principles, evidence based education materials and creativity to actively support a culture of safety. The educational “elevator boards” were launched by the Clinical Effectiveness Department in 2006 as an educational tool to educate the patients, employees, and visitors on current seasonal health and safety topics. This innovative project expanded the board use by targeting new priority patient safety initiatives. Evidence based practices related to obstructive sleep apnea, hand hygiene, pandemic flu and falls were initiated and the boards provided one visual means to inform, educate and reinforce safety actions. Educational Elevator Boards may stimulate thinking and dialogue about issues of importance regarding patient care and safety.

Patient safety is a priority in the hospital. The boards are an innovative way to teach and remind the patients, staff, and visitors of health and safety information that is pertinent for a safe environment. Informed patients are empowered to take a more active role in their hospitalization and education prepares patients to better manage their condition upon discharge. Families, visitors and employees benefit from the information posted which is focused on actions to improve patient safety in the hospital as well as personal safety outside the hospital.

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**Objectives**

1. The learner will describe one innovative strategy to promote health and a safe environment within the hospital and in the community.

2. The learner will apply the strategy in the hospital, home, and in the community to improve the health and welfare of our community.

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**Assess Need for Change**

The organization’s Patient Safety and Quality Plan and the nursing department identified target areas for improvement:

- Reducing oversedation/respiratory distress in post operative patients
- Reducing fall rate
- Improving hand hygiene
- Increase flu vaccine rates
- Improve recognition of stroke symptoms in inpatients

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**Link Problem and Interventions**

The 2009 H1N1 virus emerged last year to cause the first global pandemic in more than 40 years and resulted in substantial illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. The 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine was one of the first areas of most important step in protecting against the flu. Education of who should receive the vaccine and precautions were included in the information provided on the elevator boards. The incidence of falls in the hospital and patient falls prior to hospitalization, led to education targeted to increase awareness and education of staff, patients, and visitors. Improving safety for post-operative patients led to education on Obstructive Sleep Apnea and prior to surgery medication use. Stroke information identified signs and symptoms of stroke and need for immediate action. Hand Hygiene signs were both educational and reminders and included focus on “ask your provider to wash their hands”.

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**Synthesize Best Evidence**

The evidence states adults learn better when exposed to a variety of teaching strategies. Research shows that knowledge empowers patient’s decision making and patients that actively participate in healthcare decisions are more likely to have improved outcomes. Just like television commercials, we remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear and 70% of what we see.

Methods used include colorful, organized evidence based materials that are posted in all elevators and changed at least quarterly. In recognition of literary challenges, photos and cartoons strengthen the education. Display topic decisions are based on Patient Safety and Quality Improvement projects, including Obstructive Sleep Apnea, Hand Hygiene, Fall Prevention, Strokes Awareness and Flu Prevention. Materials used on the elevator boards are widely derived from the CDC website and a variety of other sites offering free patient/health information. Decorative borders are purchased from a local school supply store.

**Design Practice Change**

Elevator boards may stimulate thinking and dialogue about issues of importance regarding patient care and safety. From January 2006 to December 2009, boards were launched by the Clinical Effectiveness Department in 2006 as an educational tool to educate the patients, employees, and visitors on current seasonal health and safety topics. This innovative project expanded the board use by targeting new priority patient safety initiatives. Evidence based practices related to obstructive sleep apnea, hand hygiene, pandemic flu and falls were initiated and the boards provided one visual means to inform, educate and reinforce safety actions. Educational Elevator Boards may stimulate thinking and dialogue about issues of importance regarding patient care and safety.

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**Implement and Evaluate Changes in Practice**

The initiative to reduce respiratory over sedation in post operative patients included education on obstructive sleep apnea, the importance of communicating home medications and rationale for extended post operative monitoring.

Fall education focused on partnerships between patient, family and staff as well as strategies to reduce risk of falls in the hospital and at home. In-hospital falls have decreased in 4 units.

No in-hospital strokes were reported prior to January 2010. One strategy used to increase awareness was the elevator boards. From Jan – July 2010, 10 in hospital strokes have been reported and treated.

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**Integrate and Maintain Changes in Practice**

People riding the elevator were randomly interviewed. “I look at the pictures and the headlines. There is usually not enough time to read all the detail words. I like the bright colors and decorations - they catch my attention. I am more attentive to keeping my mother from falling.” Staff responded to questions with “I laugh when I see some of the images. What a great way to get my attention. Thanks for changing them - I don’t get bored. I look forward to the next ones. They reminded me of signs of stroke.”

We plan to continue the education elevator boards as part of our patient safety and community education commitment.

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**References**

