



Gifford Medical Center

Patient Safety/Quality Improvement Project

Improving Patient Understanding of Their Medications

Purpose

Many patients have trouble understanding the medications prescribed to them and do not take their medications as prescribed. This leaves them vulnerable to a worsening of their clinical condition, emergency room visits, and the need for hospitalization.

Time frame: January 2015 – Present

Description

The Medication Safety Committee has focused on strategies for improving our patients' understanding of their medications.

Project Activities/Goals

Several Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles have been applied in an effort to improve our patients' understanding of their medications. Activities included:

1. Nursing staff using best practice for medication administration;
2. Nursing staff using best practice for teaching of discharge instructions and medications; and
3. Pharmacists talking to patients about their home medications and again upon discharge to answer any questions they may have and review new medications.

Our goal is to improve patient satisfaction scores on questions relating to medications to be at or above the national average over the next year.

Outcomes

Patient satisfaction scores have increased slightly, but not as much as the team had hoped. The team continues to meet regularly to work on strategies to help patients better understand their medications. There are several factors making this a complex problem to solve including the patient's medical condition, the number of medications and the complexity of the medication regimen. Additionally, many patients could benefit from more family involvement to assist with managing their medications.

Contact

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