Instructions for using the Perioperative Patient Throughput and Turnover Worksheet

Surgery department personnel are always interested in improving turnover time. Surgeons often complain that room turnover takes up so much time they are unable to book more procedures in a day. This tool uses Swim Lane process mapping to assist the perioperative team in mapping out each task required during the turnover process. A commitment from the Surgery Governance Committee is essential to the success of a process change for improving efficiency. It is also important that the Governance Committee defines the turnover times and first procedure on-time starts. Clear definitions of the goals and posting achievement of the benchmarks can help engage staff members.

The Perioperative Patient Throughput and Turnover Worksheet (PowerPoint® document) is a process mapping tool where the swim lanes define each team member's lane for mapping tasks performed over the defined time period. The time increments at the top help define the amount of time each task requires and sequences tasks performed by multiple team members. The times may be longer or shorter depending on the complexity of the procedure and the physical layout of the facility. The swim lanes do not reflect a race but rather help synchronize each team member as the patient moves through the process. The first three slides provide an example to trigger discussion about the turnover process among team members. The blank slides can be edited to describe the roles at your facility and the tasks for your process flow.

We recommend that you form a group with a representative from each defined perioperative team member role. Discuss your current process for each time frame designated in the tool (eg, End of case to Patient #1 out, Patient #1 out to Patient #2 in room, Patient #2 in room to cut). Ask each team member to write out on sticky notes the activities performed during each time frame. Each role is assigned a swim lane, and team members should place the tasks in the designated lane according to the sequence in which they perform the activity. The document can be used to determine whether there are any duplicate activities, long wait times, or missing activities. Meeting with the entire team to review the swim lanes will provide a basis for a discussion about improving the efficiency of the process. Involving personnel from the preoperative and postoperative care units will provide insight into what efficiencies can be built into the process to improve the patient flow through each department and helps team members to understand what each person on the team is doing at a given time in the process. You can use the sequence we have provided as an example, or you can start with a blank slate and create your own sequence.