

Status Boards: Graphically Displaying Documentation to Enhance Patient Care

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Introduction

The status board project was initiated in response to the increased need for monitoring and improved visibility of patient safety issues. Nurses were challenged to keep up with timely and complete documentation of patient data, interventions and scheduled tasks. Analysis revealed real time view of critical documentation elements would provide the needed solution. A software feature in our EHR was developed to provide the needed functionality.

In a continuing effort to align with the core values of Hartford Hospital; Excellence, Safety, Integrity and Caring, the Nursing Informatics Team proposed the status board project to enhance patient safety practices and improve documentation. Status Boards provide a visual reference tool for nursing staff to view multiple live data elements within the patient medical record. The goal was to improve documentation quality and enhance patient safety.

Methods

The Nursing Informatics Team targeted a list of documentation areas in need of improvement, as well as, taking suggestions from staff for visual displays of pertinent patient information. With the help of Information Services, the initial Status Board was developed.

In December of 2011, a focus group of six Registered Nurses were chosen for first implementation of the project. After refinement, the Status Board pilot was rolled out to a 42 bed medical surgical unit. Training consisted of Computer Based Training modules made available to all staff, as well as, multiple communications via emails, meetings with the manager, educator, and staff of the unit. Daily rounding from the Nursing Informatics Team helped to provide one-on-one support for the first two weeks of the project. A Post-Pilot analysis including; the Nursing Informatics Team, Information Services, Educator, and Nursing Staff on the unit provided both positive and negative feedback from the pilot. After minimal adjustments in data elements on the Status Boards, the project was then expanded and rolled out hospital wide on a per unit basis.

Discussion

Status Boards are an example of a practical every day use of technology. Safety driven patient data is available in a format that provides a quick visual snap shot of unit activity and patient documentation that needs to be addressed. It is our hope that documentation practices will continue to improve as well as patient safety. To our surprise, this project has reached far more than bedside nursing. Various members of the nursing team have utilized this visual display of data for improvement processes. Staff nurses for documentation purposes, resource nurses for evaluation of unit activity, educators to monitor new orientation documentation and managers for performing daily auditing on various elements of documentation. Additionally, enhancing patient hand off and report from shift to shift was a pleasant unplanned by-product of this project. In the future, the Nursing Informatics Team sees the use of Status Boards expanding even further to enhance patient safety and documentation practices. This can occur by configuring the boards by role, and/or by specialty making them useful tools to multiple disciplines throughout the hospital.