

LESSONS LEARNED: IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC CHARTING WHILE MAINTAINING NURSING'S CARING BEHAVIORS

Article derived from Master's Thesis
By Rosa T Waldroff MSNEd, Rn, CEN
NYSCENA Treasurer

September 29, 2012

What are the challenges of educating newly hired emergency room registered nurses on the use of an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) without losing the essence of nursing, patients' caring behavior? Multiple benefits of the use of the EMR in the health care setting have been documented and include improved patient safety, cost containment, reduced length of stay (LOS), and increased patient satisfaction. Nursing acknowledges these benefits but fears that the caring behaviors of its practice cannot be adequately documented in the language of the EMR.

The EMR is a complex document involving all aspects of patient care from arrival to the facility ,to admission, testing, through the hospital stay, onto discharge, and continuing on with follow up care with primary care providers and specialists. Specific nursing language can be difficult to incorporate into the document since much of caring behavior is subjective based on patients' perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.

Hardware needs include having computer terminals or tablets that meet the needs of staff to document in. The software program used would need to have embedded caring behaviors verbiage in the document for nursing units to be successful in documenting caring behavior. Having access to complementing programs, with alerts to remind the nursing staff to document the caring behaviors, would assist the staff in completing the documentation in a timely fashion. These alerts in the EMR system should be linked to selected choices that need to be chosen. Finally being educated to where the information

(using quick links) can be quickly found in the electronic document would help the staff to be compliant in documenting all the demonstrated behaviors.

This educational program demonstrated that nurses can maintain patient-directed caring behaviors while using an EMR. The nurses were also able to document caring behaviors in the EMR when given the appropriate computer hardware, software with suitable language, training, and support from a knowledgeable instructor. This was accomplished by having the right equipment in the right place with the right educator with the right material using the right teaching strategies to achieve the desired goals.

Rosa T Waldroff MSNEd, RN, CEN.

NYSCENA Treasurer