

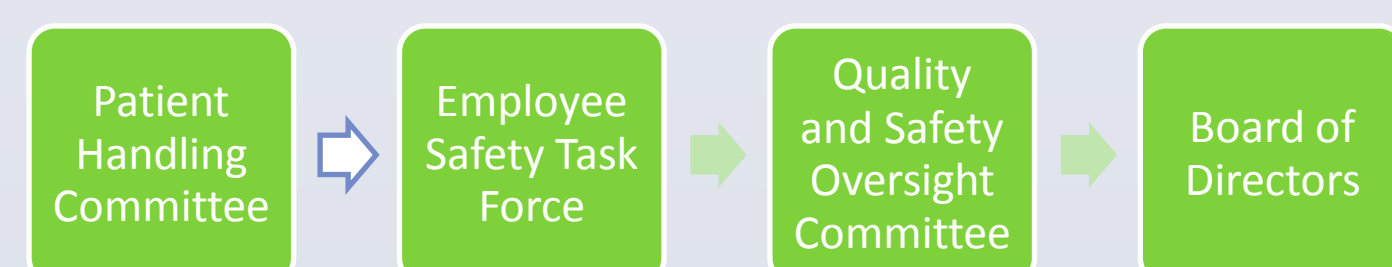
Southeastern's Patient Handling Committee

Introduction:

In 2009, Southeastern evaluated their employee injuries to identify Patient Lift Injuries as one of the top classifications for injury. The Chief Nursing Officer recommended the implementation of a Safe Patient Handling Program as recommended by the American Nurses Association. This task was assigned to the Patient Handling Committee for development, implementation, and monitoring.

Methods and Approach

The Patient Handling Committee reports to the Employee Safety Task Force. See the following diagram for the reporting structure of the Committee:



The Patient Handling Committee consists of a multidisciplinary team of staff at all levels within the organization (to include direct-care staff). The team began by evaluating the committee membership and adding additional members from key areas at risk for patient handling injuries. The committee reviewed the ANA position statement and utilized the ANA website resource tools to develop the program. Literature reviews were completed to identify best-practices in Safe Patient Handling.

The team began by developing a "Safe Patient Handling Policy" to include the identified weight restriction limits for employees to lift, and defining the process for Safe Patient Handling. In reviewing the literature, the team identified the need for a "Patient Lifting Algorithm". All of the algorithms in the literature were multiple pages and very in-depth. The direct-care staff requested that the algorithm be contained to only one page for easy use and simplicity. This took the team multiple months to develop a one-page algorithm to cover all of the aspects of patient handling. After developing the algorithm and policy, the team began the evaluation of the current lift equipment. The staff felt that without the addition of new lift equipment, the staff would not be successful in implementing a Safe Patient Handling Program effectively. The team identified the need for additional bariatric lifts and general electronic lifts. They also identified the need for additional slide boards and gait belts. The team collaborated with the Materials Management Department to identify vendors with Patient Handling Equipment. A vendor fair was held for staff throughout the organization to have hands-on use of the various types of lift equipment and vote on the type of equipment to be purchased. After the vendor fair, the Patient Handling Committee collaborated with the Materials Management to purchase the identified equipment. New lifts, slings, slide boards, gait belts, and stand-assist equipment were purchased for the organization. The committee strategically placed the equipment throughout the organization and updated the policy to include the new equipment purchases.

Staff Education and Organizational Roll-Out

The Patient Handling Committee opted to utilize champions from every direct-patient care department to provide the staff education of the new Safe Patient Handling Program. Champions were identified from each direct patient care unit by the department leadership. These champions received education and hands-on training by the Patient Handling Committee regarding the Safe Patient Handling Policy, the algorithm, the equipment, and etc. These direct-care lift champions provided the housewide education to the staff on the safe Patient Handling Program and served as a resource on the units for other staff regarding the Safe Patient Handling Program, lift equipment, and etc.

The Patient Handling Committee identified the need for additional housewide education on the Safe Patient Handling Program at the end of the 1st year of implementation. The Lift Champions and the Patient Handling Committee Members opted to hold a mandatory lift equipment skills fair. In the skills fair, the champions demonstrated the lift equipment, explained the policy and the algorithm, and answered questions brought forward by the staff related to the program. The first skills fair proved so successful, the Lift Champions and the Patient Handling Committee opted to provide this hands-on refresher course every year for all direct-care staff. See the picture below of the first annual education of the equipment.

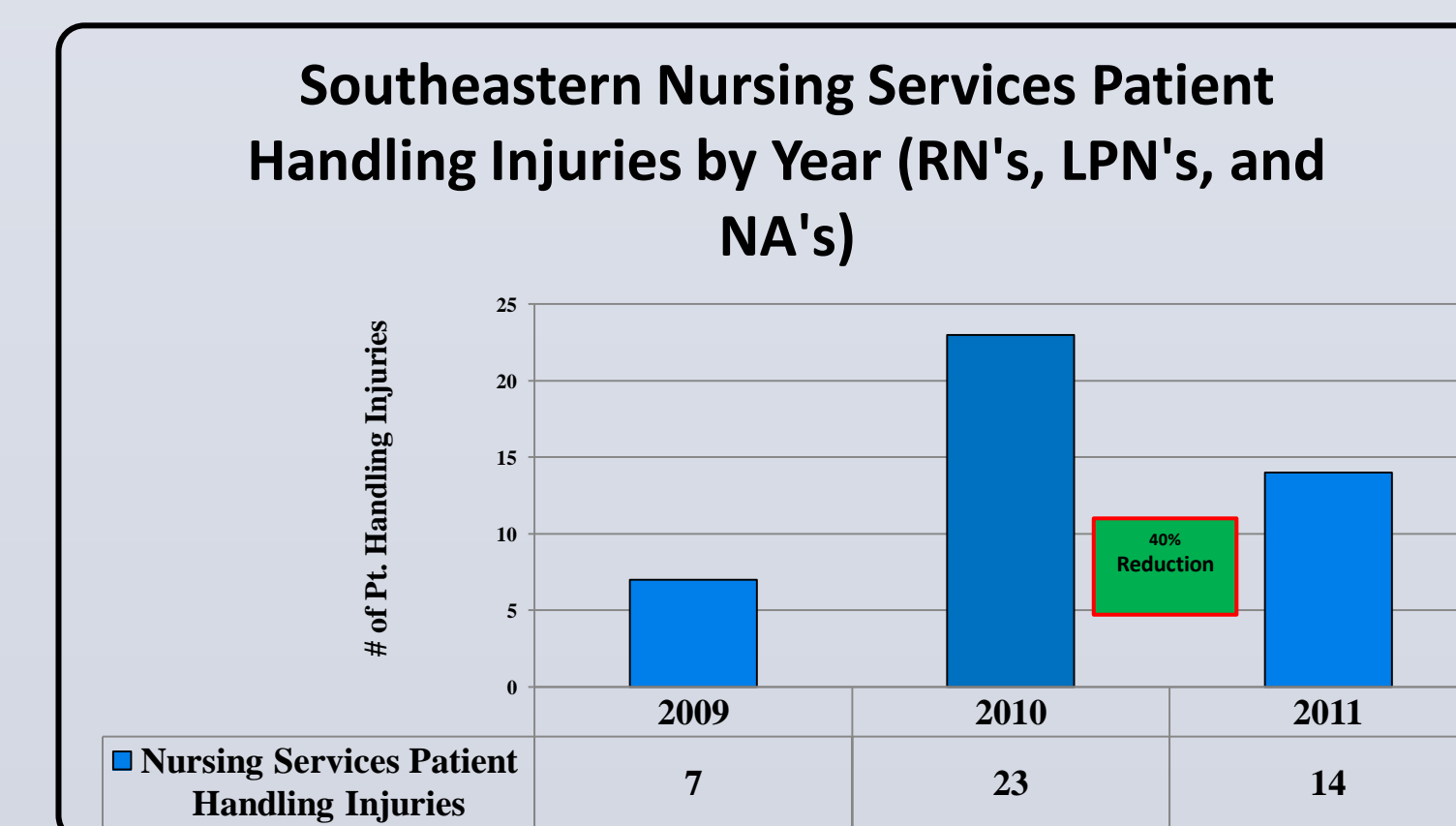


Objectives

The objective of the Safe Patient Handling Program was to reduce employee injuries related to patient handling. In addition, the new bariatric equipment would provide safer care for the patients served.

Program Results

One year after the implementation of the staff-driven Safe Patient Handling Program, Southeastern reduced their Nursing Services Patient Handling Injuries by 40% (See the graph below reflecting this improvement in results). This exceeded the set goal by the committee of 25% in the first year. This is attributed to the involvement of the direct-care staff in the development and dissemination of the program and the peer-to-peer accountability.



Conclusion

The Success of Southeastern's Safe Patient Handling Program is attributed to the involvement of the frontline staff in the development and dissemination of the program. The on-going evaluation of the program by the staff has assisted in identifying barriers to the success of the initiative and the implementation of additional educational opportunities and program changes. The Annual Safe Patient Handling Skills Fair was added at the suggestion of the direct-care staff and has proven beneficial in reinforcing the program and providing on-going staff education on Safe Patient Handling. Peer to peer accountability has reinforced the policy and improved the compliance with the Safe Patient Handling Program. The Lift Champions serve as Safe Patient Handling resources for fellow staff members and bring back suggestions, barriers, and equipment/process needs to the group. The program continues to improve due to the involvement of the frontline staff at Southeastern and the feedback they provide regarding the initiative.

References

- <http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/WorkplaceSafety/SafePatient>
- <http://www.osha.gov/ergonomics/guidelines/nursinghome/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2009-127/pdfs/2009-127.pdf>
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- <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2009-127/download.html>
- <http://www.visn8.va.gov/patientsafetycenter/safePThandling/>

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