Our institution utilizes Lean Six Sigma methodologies for continuous process improvement. The system for stocking and replenishing nursing care products was identified as a supply chain area needing improvement. Central Distribution (CD) and nursing staff evaluated the process and prioritized several areas of concern.

**Concerns/Issues Pre-Kaizen**

- **Supply Issues**: Items on PAR were not used/needed, II's, incorrect ordering information, incorrect items ordered by unit staff, patient supplies not available when needed.
- **Overstocking**: SUPPAR levels not defined, supplies ordered in excess, CD staff lacking time to count supplies.
- **Expired/wasted supplies**: PAR supplies not rotated, new stock combined with older supplies which often resulted in items expiring before use.
- **Limited supplies in inappropriate areas**: No room for overstocked supplies, excess supplies stocked in random places on unit & never used, staff holding supplies.
- **Difficult to locate supplies**: Wasted nursing time, "hunting & gathering" supplies, CD staff time wasting stocking multiple locations.
- **Unable to find supplies during emergencies**: Supplies in multiple locations & not organized well.

**Kaizen Pre-Work**

- Evaluated 3 months of supply usage to determine what supply levels should be.
- Supply items color-coded and grouped according to function to improve workflow.
- SUPPAR totals updated to reflect 36 hour usage to set kanban triggers.
- Evaluated 3 months of supply usage to determine what supply levels should be.
- Equipment, including safe patient handling devices, could be more easily used after going LEAN. Items not needed were labeled and reallocated to other units – saving $ for the organization!

In February 2012, a team comprised of Six Sigma Black Belts, staff representatives from CD, and nursing staff from an inpatient surgical unit (Transplant 5 West) collaborated to perform a Kaizen to address the stocking and supply issues.

**Kaizen Event**

- Improvised use of rope to alert nursing staff to products needed replenishing.
- Fishing tackle innovatively used to create a swivel on each CD tag.
- CD Tag flipped to yellow to indicate the kanban is reached & more supplies are needed.

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**Implementation**

- **CD Tag flipped to yellow to indicate the kanban is reached & more supplies are needed.**
- **An example of the kanban system.**
- **Smiling now... finding supplies are a snap!**
- **An "NA corner" is created with patient supplies.**

**Results**

**Kaizen Goals/Outcomes**

- Patient supplies not available
- Improved medication during patient care
- Improved medication during patient care
- Improved medication during patient care
- Improved medication during patient care

**AVAILABILITY OF PATIENT CARE SUPPLIES**

- **Organizations of Supplies**
- **Adequate stock of supplies needed**
- **Certified Dealing/Omney**
- **Multipurpose/Universal**
- **Personal Care**