

Paper Details

School: Capella University

Subject: Nursing

Topic: Interdisciplinary Plan Proposal

Course: NURS-FPX4010

Referencing: APA

Pages: 6

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Interdisciplinary Plan Proposal

Name:

NURS-FPX4010

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Overcrowding in the emergency department (ED) threatens the health of the public and the safety of patients. The problem is attributable to the increase in the number of patients undergoing treatment, assessment, and waiting for the doctor's appointment (Eiset, Kirkegaard, & Erlandsen, 2019). The resultant effect is increased mortality rates, delays in treatment, and poor patient outcomes (Morley et al., 2018). The proposal, thus, attempts to solve overcrowding in the ED to improve patients' outcomes and enhance job satisfaction among emergency department staff.

Objective

The plan proposal aims to highlight the need for collaboration between emergency department staff and those in the primary care setting to reduce the number of patients' visiting the emergency room for minor issues. Additionally, it underscores the importance of increasing the resources in the emergency department to improve the experience of patients and reduce congestion.

Questions and Predictions

i. **Why is overcrowding a major issue in the emergency department?**

Overcrowding in the emergency department leads to patient's dissatisfaction with the quality of care provided, staff fatigue and burnout, increased patient mortality and morbidity, prolonged hospital stays

ii. **How will collaboration between the emergency department and primary**

care setting health professionals help resolve overcrowding in the ED? The collaboration of staff between the two settings will help redirect patients with minor issues to the primary care setting. Physicians in the healthcare setting will be willing to utilize technology to provide care to patients in the evenings and over the weekends to eliminate congestion in the emergency department

iii. **What is the role of healthcare leaders in solving emergency overcrowding?**

Provide resources to train educate patients, facilitate collaboration between primary care and emergency department staff, and address staffing issues in the ED

Change Theories and Leadership Strategies

Leaders determine the success of changes in an organization. They communicate the change process; encourage people to implement the change process, and continuously update them regarding the progress made. Therefore, the theory of planned change and democratic leadership style will help meet the change objective. Democratic leadership solicits view from individuals affected by the change process to minimize their resistance (Mansaray, 2019). The emergency department employees, the primary care setting medics, and organizational leaders have a significant responsibility in ensuring that the suggested changes are integrated into the culture of the organization.

The theory of planned change provides steps to consider when examining the issue and identifying solutions to address it. The steps are seven in number and include: diagnosing the problem; assessing the capacity and motivation for change; examining the change agent

motivation and resources; designing change strategies and objectives; identifying the change agent role and responsibilities; maintaining the change; and ensuring that the proposed changes become part of organizational culture (Burke, 2017). The seven steps require excellent communication between stakeholders, regular feedback, and practical problem-solving skills. These aspects require collaboration between key stakeholders to address overcrowding in the facility's emergency department.

Team Collaboration

The primary objective of the change management program is to reduce overcrowding in the emergency department, and in turn, reduce mortality and morbidity rates as well as healthcare spending. Therefore, various stakeholders will assume multiple roles in addressing the issue as highlighted in the table below

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities in Implementing the proposed Changes
Hospital Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide the required resources to implement the proposed changes in the facility and the emergency department -Use financial disincentives to discourage the use of emergency services by patients with non-emergent conditions -Increase staffing levels at the emergency department

Nursing Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Educate patients on the appropriate utilization of the emergency department services -Collaborate with those in the primary care setting to enhance patient's access to necessary care
Physicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with primary care physicians to enhance patient access to care in the weekends and evenings

Collaborative Approach

Both the emergency and primary care setting medical professionals must work together to address overcrowding in the emergency department. Physicians at the ED and those in the primary care setting must collaborate so that patients with non-emergent issues can access care in the evening and the weekends using technology. Nurses in both settings must work together to educate patients about medical conditions that necessitate a visit to the emergency department. However, for the interdisciplinary team to be successful, the change agent must be part of the change process through effective communication. The cause of the change initiative should be clear and compelling, so that team members became passionate about the program goals and objectives. The project manager must communicate the change process as well as define each member's roles and responsibilities to reduce conflicts. Inclusion of team members in every step of the process is crucial to decreasing competition and duplication of tasks.

Required Organizational Resources

Organizations require multiple resources to implement necessary changes. Some of the resources that the project manager needs to address overcrowding in the emergency department are finances, human resources, notebooks, physical facility, and time. The staff at the facility must be willing to dedicate some of their time to take part in the change process. For instance, they should strike a balance between taking care of their patients and contributing to the change process. The hospital administration must set aside some funds to facilitate the implementation of the necessary changes in the emergency department. The funds will be channelled towards purchasing of notebooks, pens, and materials for educating patients about the conditions that necessitate their visit to the emergency department. Some funds will be used to hire an external expert and prepare training programs. Health professionals must be willing to educate patients about emergency department visits and be ready to collaborate to reduce patients with minor issues from visiting the emergency department. The approximate budget for implementing the proposed plan is about \$ 320, 000. The \$ 20,000 will be directed to purchasing necessary supplies while \$300,000 will be used to hire external experts and organize staff meetings.

References

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