

August 2007

In an ongoing effort to align with The Joint Commission's patient safety goals, we have been working on improving patient handoffs and communication. We have adopted the Situation, Background, Assessment and Recommendation (SBAR) tool. I am including a DVD and educational materials to share with your instructors and students to highlight the importance of accurate handoff/communication. We will be expecting the students to start to practice this technique in the Fall.

I would also like to take this opportunity to review documentation guidelines with regards to student nurses caring for patients in clinical areas that use Meditech. To review an issue that occurred recently, I will use the SBAR format:

Situation: Some staff nurses have been under the assumption that all nursing students document their assessment/observations/vital signs, etc in the patient's medical record.

Background: Since Valley's conversion to Meditech documentation, we have not trained the instructors/nursing students to document in the computer system. Valley has also not supported the use of "hand-written" student nurses notes.

Assessment: There have been gaps in the documentation of vitals signs, observations, etc. in the medical record

Recommendation: Starting in the Fall 07, each nursing student will be required to use the "Daily Nurse's Notes" to document their care. At the end of the clinical day, the student is to review their documentation with their Instructor and both are to sign the form. When the student is providing their final report to the staff nurse, they are to review the documentation and have the staff nurse sign the note and place in the medical record.

And lastly, Valley is embarking on an activity study for all clinical areas. Due to that fact, our CNO has decided that there are to be no nursing students on the units to skew the results. So, no nursing students are to be on the units from Wednesday, September 5th through Thursday, September 13th.

I am sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

If you have any questions to the above, do not hesitate to contact me.