IDENTIFICATION:
Background - New surgical unit has capacity of 32 beds, 8 - 9 nurses in a shift. The unit has two big medication carts (holds medication bins for all 32 beds) and 5 small medication carts, which are shared among 8 nurses in a shift. Usually around 2 pm the pharmacy technician delivers the medication to the big carts, which are centrally located in the unit.

Problems identified - Occurrences of missing doses of medicines, increased time spend during med cart bin exchange, dissatisfaction from nurses and pharmacy technicians, med carts are not charged and left on the hall way.

How the problems identified - The nurses and pharmacy technicians identified the problems.
Base line data collected from nurses as a survey using a questionnaire about their opinion. But the data for missed doses are not collected.

PROCESS:
Method - Leadership team met with the pharmacy manager and pharmacy lead technician, and discussed the solutions. Nurses and pharmacists agreed with the idea of permanent location of medication carts. Pharmacy technicians agreed to go around the unit and deliver medication to the carts. Leadership team developed a questionnaire about the permanent medication cart location. In the survey 64.5% of nurses who participated in the survey agreed with the idea of permanent medication cart locations.

SOLUTION:
Solution - Solution developed is the permanent location of medication carts.

Implementation - Survey results and plan presented to staff in staff meeting. Start date announced to nurse and pharmacy technicians and started the process.

Result - No complaints about location of medication carts by nurses and pharmacy technicians, less missed doses, medications carts are charged always, carts are accessible to nurses, free hallways as the medication carts are located in alcoves, and enhances patient safety due to assigning one specific location for medication cart by avoiding mixing medications for different patients.

Measures - Fliers on medication cart, tells about keeping the medication cart in the permanent location. A note indicates room numbers the medication cart carries. Nurses, pharmacy technician and charge nurse make sure the medication carts are in the correct location.