Preventing Falls and Injuries from Falls
Sinai Hospital of Baltimore

Program/Project Description.
Patient falls are a high-risk, high-volume, high-cost challenge for hospitals nationwide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data confirms that nearly one-third of U.S. adult's ages 65 and older fall each year. Injuries that result from falls can lead to significant morbidity and mortality. In addition to pain and suffering for individuals and their families, fall-related injuries result in a substantial economic cost to our healthcare system. In partnership with The Maryland Patient Safety Center "Keeping Patients Safe from Falls", Sinai integrated the SAFE from falls Roadmap. Our participation enabled us to examine tools in the field and further strengthen the fall management program. In the year following our participation the number of falls per 1,000 patient days significantly decreased and harm from a fall reached zero for eight consecutive months.

Process.
In keeping with Sinai's organizational plan for improvement, the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model was used, this model enabled us to be more rigorous and objective in the assessment and analysis of our activities. Innovative ideas, the involvement and input of all employees and the education of family members have led to a significant decrease in the number of falls at Sinai Hospital.

Solution.
A number of factors have contributed to the success in reducing falls, especially falls with injury. For example, when a patients with a history of falls were moved to rooms closer to the nursing station, their falls stopped. Individualized focused care, given the appropriate risk score, was also very successful in decreasing falls. Staff huddles provide an opportunity for all employees to play a role in preventing falls. Every day, staff participate in a huddle. If a patient has fallen, the group discusses where, when and why the fall occurred and strategies for preventing future falls.

Measurable Outcomes.
Developed a formalized methodology for assessment and reassessment of fall risk that is fully integrated with the patient electronic medical record.
Developed and implemented a list of medications likely to increase a patient's risk of falling for nurses to use as a reference when assessing a patient's fall risk. Utilized white boards to identify patients at high risk of falling. Implemented hourly rounds to assess or to address patient's personal needs (for example, toileting needs). Require support staff to perform routine checks to ensure bed alarms are working properly. Educated all staff regarding the use of visual identifiers for high-fall risk patients. Implemented an education campaign supported by senior leadership on the organization's fall prevention program that includes new, existing, and per-diem staff.

Sustainability.
The fall safety committee meets BI-monthly and regularly provides information on fall rates and fall PEARL for lessons learned. The rates are also presented at the performance improvement council, where staff can compare rates among nursing units and together strive to find innovative solutions to reduce falls and prevent patient harm from a fall.

Role of Collaboration and Leadership.
Patient safety is a top priority for our organization, preventing harm from falls is a strategic imperative for Sinai. Our quality board also receives a report on our safety program initiatives and is actively engaged in the oversight of our program. We have embedded patient safety goals into our employees performance review system. Leadership and all staff have performance goals that focus on patient safety, falls is one of those goals. We have increased our event reporting system 50 percent in one year. The successes of the fall safety committee are supported by a strong foundation built on trust and mutual respect for all staff.

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