Electronic Visibility Boards Improve Patient Care Quality, Safety, and Flow: Lessons from Design and Implementation

Field, Mary; Fong, Krista; Shade, Carol; Seattle Children’s Hospital; Seattle, WA

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to outline two inpatient pediatric units’ experience with designing and implementing electronic visibility boards, with a focus on improvement of patient care quality, safety, and flow.

Background/Significance: As part of a quality improvement system, hospitals often rely on huddles as the template for exchanging key information between staff members. At Seattle Children’s Hospital (SCH), white boards displaying key patient information pertaining to patient care and flow have historically been a core foundation to the huddle process on nursing units. Based on the growth of the hospital and the increase in patient acuity, white boards were no longer meeting the nursing needs on the unit. Some of the challenges experienced with the white boards include: the boards often contained inaccurate and outdated information, were not visible remotely, and required manual user input for updates.

Description: As part of SCH’s continuous strive for excellence, the hospital recognized that these white boards play a key role in patient quality, safety, and flow. To address this gap, SCH designed and implemented electronic wall-mounted 75-inch monitors and a desktop dashboard accessible through the electronic health record (EHR).

Evaluation and Outcomes: Initial metrics indicate improved incentive spirometry compliance, nursing documentation of care plans, and flow awareness on the unit by both providers and nurses. These results suggest that electronic visibility boards can enhance patient care quality, safety, and flow.

Conclusions: Electronic visibility boards can improve patient care quality, safety, and flow with proper design and implementation. The most important factor to design is ensuring a multidisciplinary team as this will ensure the design is applicable to all workflows. In addition, the electronic visibility boards are most effective when intentionally integrated into staff huddles.

Contact: mary.field@seattlechildrens.org, krista.fong@seattlechildrens.org