

NICHE



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ACUITY ADAPTABLE CARE DELIVERY MODEL

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PROBLEM: Rapidly deteriorating conditions that occur with older adult patients and frequent in-hospital transitions that can cause missed or delayed treatments, medication errors and patient falls.

SOLUTION: Incorporating an evidence-based acuity adaptable care delivery model that helps hospitals reduce the number of transfers, decrease length of stay (LOS) and improve patient satisfaction.

Problem Identified The complexity of care for older adult patients presents administrators and staff with unique challenges. Care provided must respond to an acute health care crisis, as well as recognize the likelihood of rapidly deteriorating conditions that occur with the older adult. Traditionally, for patients to receive a level of care matching their varying acuity they may be moved three to six times during their hospital stay which can cause missed or delayed treatments, medication errors, patient falls and result in contact with as many as 100 health care providers during their hospitalization. Typical nursing units may transfer or discharge 40-70% of their patients every day.



Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders

Solution Formulated By incorporating an evidence-based acuity adaptable care delivery model, hospitals can reduce the amount of transfers, decrease length of stay and improve patient satisfaction.

The Acuity Adaptable Care Delivery Model:

- Places the patient on a unit with a varied levels of acuity
- Nurses alter the level of care based on the acuity of the patient rather than changing the location of patient
- Allows for the care of patients from intermediate level to intensive care and from general medical/surgical to intermediate

Components of the model include:

- Cardiac Monitoring (hard wire/telemetry)
- Hemodialysis at bedside
- Use of Maximum Oxygen Delivery Systems
- Ability to titrate vasoactive medications
- Adjusting nurse/patient ratio to accommodate change in patient's acuity level
- Room design that reflects patients' assessment/monitoring requirements
- Knowledgeable nursing staff to care for the acutely ill older adult patient

The use of the model can positively impact patient, physician, and nurse satisfaction, decrease patient anxiety, and reduce mortality, complications, LOS and hospital costs.

NICHE Role The NICHE Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) core curriculum is designed for use by those at NICHE sites who train nurses in best practices for hospitalized older adults. GRNs are the foundation of system-wide improvement to achieve positive outcomes for hospitalized older adults. The NICHE program, available to hospitals throughout North America, offers evidence-based, interdisciplinary approaches to promote improved care for the hospitalized older adult.

Evaluation/Results Implementation of the model at Saint Mary's Health Care in May 2011 reduced transfer of patients to a higher level of care by 35% and improved patient satisfaction scores by 9%.

For more information

1. Kwan, M. A. (2011). Acuity-adaptable nursing care: Exploring its place in designing the future patient room. *Health Environments Research & Design Journal*, 5(1), 77-93.
2. Hendrich A. L., Fay J., & Sorrells A. K. (2004). Effects of acuity adaptable rooms on flow of patients and delivery of care. *American Journal of Critical Care*, 13 (1), 35-45.
3. Bonuel, N., Cesario, S., & Cabading, A.D. (2010). The need for critical care nursing skills in an acuity-adaptable care delivery system. *Critical Care Nursing Quarterly*, 33 (4),356-60.

NICHE-related resources

1. NICHE Critical Care Nursing of Older Adults Series. (Available at <http://www.nicheprogram.org/courses/142>)
2. NICHE Education Brief: The GRN's Bedside Guide: Simple Environmental Modifications to Enhance Safety for Older Adults. (Available at http://www.nicheprogram.org/course_modules/236)
3. NICHE Education Brief: Caring for the Older Adult with COPD, Parts 1-3. (Available at <http://www.nicheprogram.org/courses/144>)

About NICHE

NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders) is an international program designed to help hospitals improve the care of older adults. The vision of NICHE is for all patients 65-and-over to be given sensitive and exemplary care. The mission of NICHE is to provide principles and tools to stimulate a change in the culture of health care facilities to achieve patient-centered care for older adults. NICHE, based at NYU College of Nursing, consists of over 400 hospitals and health care facilities throughout North America. For more information visit www.nicheprogram.org.

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