



Dialysis Safety Checks **Saints Medical Center Dialysis**

Contact Information

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Category: Incorrect Dialyzer or Dialyzing Solution, Patient Falls, Hand Hygiene
Type of Facility: Non-profit dialysis facility
Number of Patients: 175
Number of Physicians: 5

Background

Saints Medical Center Dialysis participated in the 5-Diamond Patient Safety Program to improve patient safety in their facility. Nurse manager Jennifer Finn initiated their undertaking of the 5-Diamond Program with the support of their medical director Dr. Douglas Mesler. The 5-Diamond Patient Safety Program was developed by the ESRD Network of New England (Network 1) and the Mid-Atlantic Renal Coalition (Network 5) to assist dialysis facilities with the improvement of both staff and patient awareness of patient safety. The 5-Diamond Patient Safety program consists of 11 components. For each component completed, each facility will be recognized as a 1-Diamond, 2-Diamond, 3-Diamond, 4-Diamond, or 5-Diamond facility. The 5-Diamond Program has been endorsed by RPA and fulfills the Keeping Kidney Patients Safe Patient Safety Events in several areas including patient falls, medication errors and omission and hand hygiene.

Saints Medical Center Dialysis staff was concerned about increased errors regarding dialysis, particularly increased errors surrounding treatment setup and the lack of a safety net to recognize set up errors. The facility staff was also concerned about patient falls.

Policies and activities implemented

To address patient safety concerns, the facility examined its existing process for safety checks. Safety checks were performed once the patient was on the machine. The person initiating treatment would perform a safety check as the patient was being put on, and then a second check was performed by another person after that. After beginning the 5-Diamond program, Saints Medical Center Dialysis immediately revised their policy to conduct safety checks prior to a patient being put on a machine. Now, a neon tag is placed on the machine after set up. A second staff member double-checks the machine to ensure proper set up, and then removes the neon tag. All patients are educated not to allow treatment to begin if the neon tag is still on the machine.



Patients are educated by their primary nurses, as well as other staff. Saints Medical Center Dialysis sends out a "Renal Reminders" newsletter to patients at least every 3 months with clinic updates, educational tidbits, and important contact information. They try to provide empowerment tips in each issue, to help patients be more actively involved in their care and keep them as independent as possible. When Saints Medical Center Dialysis initiated the "Pre Treatment Safety Check", they used "Renal Reminders" to let patients know what they were doing and how they could participate.

Additionally, Saints Medical Center Dialysis instituted a fall risk assessment policy, based on the [Hendrich II Fall Risk Model](#). It focuses on eight independent risk factors: confusion, disorientation, and impulsivity; symptomatic depression; altered elimination; dizziness or vertigo; male gender; administration of anti-epileptics (or changes in dosage or cessation); administration of benzodiazepines; and poor performance in rising from a seated position in a Get-Up-and-Go test. The facility also utilized tools from the 5-Diamond Safety program. All patients are now walked to and from the scale, and those identified as a fall risk remain in the treatment area until their transportation arrives.

Saints Medical Center Dialysis also has a new policy that has significantly reduced use of clamps to aid in preservation of fistula accesses. It has also made patients active participants in their care. During changeover, patients are now seen holding their own sites post treatment.

Improvements have also been made in hand hygiene. In 2008, Saints Medical Center Dialysis started the "Bug Brigade". Staff who are out of compliance with infection control procedures receive a drawing of a bug and a note about how they have deviated from procedures in their mailbox, as observed by hand hygiene monitors. Since beginning the program, staff have greatly improved their hand hygiene and use of personal protective equipment.

All staff participated in the 5-Diamond Safety program and the facility has a Quality Council, Education Council and a Cannulation Committee. All staff are strongly encouraged to join a council, and their participation is positively reflected in their yearly performance evaluations.

Since undertaking the 5-Diamond program, Saints Medical Center Dialysis saw an 80 percent reduction in treatment set up errors from 2008 to 2010. Additionally, falls in the unit have decreased from 9 falls in 2009 to 3 falls in 2010. Saints Medical Center Dialysis is now a 5-Diamond facility.

Recommendations

Saints Medical Center encourages all facilities to implement a safety program and emphasizes that all staff should be involved from the start. Ms. Finn notes that it isn't entirely up to management to make improvements, "The more that staff are encouraged to be involved and actively participate, the better they feel about the work they do, and the better quality of care the patient receives. Patients that are encouraged to participate, feel better about the care they receive and live longer, better lives!"