



Geriatric Surgery Verification
American College of Surgeons

GSV Insight: Geriatric Surgery Nurse Champions

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INTRODUCTION

Michael Bencur [00:00:10] Hello and welcome to GSV Insight. Let's talk about Geriatric Surgery Nurse Champions. I am Mike Bencur, the Geriatric Surgery Verification Project Manager. Today, Amy Bulger will be joining me to discuss GSV Standard 4.1 Geriatric Surgery Nurse Champions. Welcome, Amy, and thank you for joining me today.

Amy Bulger [00:00:29] Thanks so much, Mike.

Michael Bencur [00:00:31] Can you please tell us a little bit more about yourself and your hospital?

Amy Bulger [00:00:35] Sure. My name is Amy Bulger. I'm the Director of Geriatrics Operations at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. We're an approximately 826-bed academic medical center Level I trauma center. We provide tertiary quaternary care. We're a founding member of Mass General Brigham, and we're affiliated with Harvard Medical School.

Michael Bencur [00:00:57] Great.

QUESTION #1

Michael Bencur [00:00:57] So for this standard, how did you obtain buy-in from key participants?

Amy Bulger [00:01:03] So we had an initial investment from the hospital in the Center for Geriatric Surgery to implement GSV under the direction of Dr. Zara Cooper. And through the Center for Geriatric Surgery, we have identified and engaged interdisciplinary geriatric clinical partners in this work. Many with geriatric training or certifications, and to highlight the need and opportunity around optimizing care for older adult patients and their loved ones. For nursing specific standards, we had meetings with the Nurse Executive Board, which includes our Chief Nursing Officer, Associate Chief Nursing Officers and others. We met with local nursing leadership, frontline staff and potential nurse champions, and we are very fortunate here that nurses throughout The Brigham are interested in geriatrics and there are many that are in masters and doctorate programs who are very interested in participating. So it was fairly easy for us to obtain buy-in.

QUESTION #2

Michael Bencur [00:01:59] That's great to hear. Can you describe the key steps taken to implement this standard?

Amy Bulger [00:02:04] Sure. We identified other geriatric leaders with common interests that I referenced before and participated in initial discussions with our nursing executive leadership, who had strong

support for Geriatric Surgery Nurse Champions, but then also wanted to go further and expand into non-surgical areas. So we ended up including geriatric champions in the medicine, emergency department, and oncology areas. We developed an ask identifying champions structured around Standard 4.1 with the core responsibilities of leadership and education, quality improvement and commitment to continuing education. The local leaders then asked frontline nursing staff about any interest in geriatrics and community work and shared the core responsibilities we developed as a Geriatric Nurse Champion. We then created the Geriatric Care Improvement Committee that I currently co-chair with another nurse leader who is trained as a geriatric nurse practitioner. The vision was to convene nursing and interdisciplinary professionals together and use this committee as a forum to share best practices, develop and operationalize QI projects and then discuss key issues. We hold meetings every other month and the nurses attend the meetings, complete their required continuing education hours, share knowledge with their peers, and complete the QI work. We also have the ability to have one-on-one support with our Champions for Quality Improvement, project coaching, and office hours.

QUESTION #3

Michael Bencur [00:03:35] Great. And can you describe how you sustained momentum with your team?

Amy Bulger [00:03:40] Sure. As someone with a background in quality improvement, momentum and sustainability are critical to the success of any quality improvement program or project. We have had some bumps along the way, as many others have related to the COVID-19 pandemic and patient acuity. But we have persevered, and that's a testament to our strong nurse champions and really the urgency around creating the best possible environment for older adults. This has been crucial to have alignment with institutional priorities, external programs that are unit based and focused on the patient and caregiver. It's also important to leverage executive and local leadership support, our unit-based practice councils, and frontline staff. We have highlighted the urgency and benefit for patients and caregivers and this is really helps us sustain the momentum by keeping our eye really centered around the patient and the caregiver. We also have focused on generating small wins and celebrating successes, and this has been key. So supporting abstract development and presentations at local and national conferences and then nominating and supporting staff for awards. We were fortunate enough to win the NICHE ABIM Choosing Wisely award. We have had internal recognition with our Pillars of Excellence awards.

QUESTION #4

Michael Bencur [00:05:01] That's fantastic. And do you have any educational resources available for your hospital staff pertaining to this standard?

Amy Bulger [00:05:08] Yes. So the Brigham had previously been a NICHE member and it stands for Nurses Improving the Care of Healthsystem Elders. And we re-enrolled in the program in June of 2020. We completed the leadership training program as an interdisciplinary team with two other nurse leaders, geriatric training and our geriatric PA. And since then we've been involved in the NICHE Program. We have several of our nurse leaders, clinical educators, staff, nurses and PCAs who will be attending the NICHE Conference this April and presenting three posters. And we have remained engaged in that work, which has been wonderful. We also have geriatricians and geriatric PA who've been incredibly generous with their time, collaborating on and presenting during interdisciplinary sessions, including the geriatric session at our Nora McDonough Nurse Residency Program. We've also held interdisciplinary geriatric lecture series, which have been open to all staff. And lastly, we incentivize nurses to become certified. So we are able to offer certification through the ANCC for gerontologic nurses.

QUESTION #5

Michael Bencur [00:06:18] That's amazing. And what are some tips for other hospitals who are struggling to implement this standard?

Amy Bulger [00:06:24] So I think it's really important to create a vision and urgency for the Nurse Champion role centered around patient care. The nurses are vital to the success of this work. It's also important to identify strong executive local leadership in frontline nursing support and also thinking about alignment with internal programs and hospital objectives. So improvement of quality indicators, increasing patient satisfaction, increasing staff engagement, satisfaction and retention, as well as alignment with external programs, particularly around data collection and reporting and resource prioritization. One example is the Magnet Recognition Program through the American Nurses Credentialing Center. They have a certification requirement as part of Magnet. So there's an opportunity to highlight gerontologic nursing certification, and it's also helpful to align projects so they can be submitted as Magnet narratives. Other programs in the external space that we have aligned with include the Trauma Program through the ACS, IHI Age-Friendly, the NICHE Program, Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation. And Massachusetts also has an Alzheimer's and Dementia Act that has requirements for a hospital operational plan, as well as staff education that we have built to align with our GSV work.

CLOSING REMARKS

Michael Bencur [00:07:44] Great. Thank you so much for joining us today and sharing your experience on the implementation of Standard 4.1. Amy's email is up on the screen if anyone would like to reach out with further questions. Thank you again, Amy. It was a pleasure having you.

Amy Bulger [00:08:01] Thank you for having me.

Michael Bencur [00:08:04] I hope you all have learned as much as I have today. And if you would like to share your GSV implementation strategies, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at mbencur@facs.org. Thank you.