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Decreasing Linen Use: A Nurse-Driven Policy

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Decreasing Linen Use: A Nurse Driven Policy

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BACKGROUND
• Health care facilities are energy intensive and emit up to 10% of greenhouse gas emission in the United States
• Linen is a significant expense in healthcare
• Efficient Linen use reduces environmental impacts and decreases costs

PURPOSE
• To measure the impacts of a new linen utilization policy on:
  o linen use and cost
  o nurse satisfaction
  o hospital acquired infection (HAI) rates, specifically Clostridium difficile (C diff)
  o patient satisfaction on medical-surgical units

METHODS
• Quality Improvement Project: Implemented a linen policy on 2 intervention units and compared results with 2 control units
• Metrics tracked: lbs of linen/adjusted patient day, infection rate data quarterly, patient satisfaction scores for “Cleanliness of room”
• Nursing staff survey: tracked trends/perceptions on linen use practices pre/post study
• Tracked: Unused, clean/excess linen in patient rooms

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES
• Staff survey demonstrated increased awareness of linen use and management
• No increase in infection rates were found during the pilot
• Linen use and cost decreased on the intervention units
• Cleanliness of rooms” patient satisfaction scores improved on the intervention units

DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS
• Moving from an automated practice of changing linens daily to a more lenient linen change policy did not negatively affect our patient population
• This project increased staff awareness of the links between their practice, cost savings, and environmental stewardship
• There is potential for expanding the linen utilization policy to other departments and hospitals
• Further research could quantify the water, energy, chemicals, and labor cost savings associated with decreased linen use to further demonstrate how environmental stewardship links with hospital management

LIMITATIONS
• Educating staff due to variable shifts, summer vacations, new hires
• 41% Linen Surveillance tools completed

REFERENCES: