Revising Patient Discharge Process to Reduce Readmission Rates and Focus on Patient Engagement
Betsy Kingston MSN.RN-BC and Barbara Grande MSN.RN-BC
Nursing Informatics, Capital Health System, Pennington & Trenton, NJ

Introduction/Plan
Review the current process in discharge and streamline process to reduce readmission rates and focus on engagement in the discharge process. Four big areas of focus:
- Follow up appointments and phone calls
- Medication reconciliation
- Red flag teaching items around diagnosis
- Discharge envelope and discharge instructions

Barriers include:
- Poorly defined roles
- Limitations within software
- Time constraints
- Education materials

Team to review and analyze data on discharge follow up phone calls, determine action items and revise all electronic assessments around the discharge process.

Objective
Strategic goal for Capital Health is to provide safe discharge for patients. Areas of focus that impact patient communication and links to readmission are reviewed and changes made to enhance outcome.

Materials & Methods/Do
Discharge process is multidisciplinary. Key Stakeholders:
- Patient/Family/Care Givers
- Nursing
- Care Management
- Pharmacy
- Care Transitions
- Provider's
- Nutrition
- Rehab

During the transition of care every patient will receive discharge envelope which includes detailed instructions, updated medication list including new prescriptions, educational materials on drugs, disease and treatment.

Universal transfer form used for every patient going to another facility or having agency care for the patient and is completed electronically.

Discharge summaries to be completed by physicians and patient services staff must print and send with documents. The discharging nurse ensures that appropriate documents are copied and ready for transport with patients.

Conclusion/Act
- Follow up actions
- Communicate HCAPS scores
- Supplies available
- Post implementation
- Discharge process between LIP, Nursing and Care Management
- Chart review
- Report outcomes to readmission steering/quality safety committee
- The process involves many users, needs frequent monitoring and reinforcement to drive improvements/outcome