

# Enhancing Intraoperative Communication to Families Utilizing Technology

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# Enhancing Intraoperative Communication to Families Utilizing Technology

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## ASSESSMENT

A 9 hospital health system in eastern Pennsylvania, that services approximately 53,000 surgical cases per year, sought a way to enhance communication to the patients' families during the surgical experience. Looking to technology, Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) partnered with a company that developed a HIPAA compliant, modern way to send secure text updates to patients' families and loved ones.



## PREPARATION AND PLANNING

A multidisciplinary team consisting of perioperative leadership, information services, and operating room staff was developed to research and launch a communication system. The team participated in site visits to gain a broader understanding of the electronic communication application, called EASE (Electronic Access to Surgical Events). Based off of research and information observed, standard work was developed. Clinical inclusion criteria were set to identify cases applicable to the use of the application.



## IMPLEMENTATION

- Utilized a phased approach beginning December 2017.
- Physician champions were identified to support the project implementation.
- Workflows were created for staff and education was presented to nursing, physician, anesthesia, and non-clinical ancillary staff.
- Preoperative staff begin the by explaining the technology to patients and family. The process is completely voluntary and controlled by the patient.
- Once a patient agrees to use the application, consent is obtained and the patient is registered.
- Hand off is then given to the operating room nurse.
- The surgical team provides updates regarding patient's condition.
- Guidelines with standard phases and tips for timing messages appropriately were provided to the team.
- At the conclusion of surgery, a five question survey is provided to those utilizing the application to receive updates. Data is reported out in real time.

## IMPLICATIONS

The current communication coming out of operating rooms is varied from hospital to hospital. Organizations can support their missions to be transparent and communicative using this adjunct technology. It is especially important during the patient's most vulnerable time, which will aide in patient and family satisfaction.

## OUTCOME

- By June of 2018, operating rooms at 6 of the 10 surgical locations were utilizing EASE.
- To date, over 40,254 surveys have been returned. Results of the surveys are separated by surgical locations.
- Family members have been reached in all 50 states and 2 countries.
- Through examining comments and survey data, there will be a positive effect in our patient satisfaction scores.