

# SURGICAL NURSE LIAISON

Lighting the way  
A Quality Improvement Initiative  
SNL Pilot Project  
Hamilton Health Sciences

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## Outline

1. Indications/Purpose for Surgical Nurse Liaison  
Literature Review, RNAO BPG
2. Pilot Project Overview
  - Recognizing a Need: Pre Liaison Surveys
  - Establishing Support: Patient /Family Needs Assessment, Staff Feedback
  - Survey Results (six month pilot project completion)
  - Outcome Results
3. Future Indications at HHSC
4. Ongoing evolution of the role



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## Literature Review

- ✓ 'Communication is traditionally fragmented during perioperative period'
- 'Intraoperative progress reports gave a sense of control & reduction in stress and anxiety'
- 'Caring historically has been considered to be the essence of nursing practice'
- 'Caring behaviors can minimize or eliminate the dehumanization for both the nurse and the patient. This is a risk in the technologically advanced OR setting'

Cunningham, M. (2003), p. 16  
Leske, J.S. (1993), p. 424.  
Parsons, E. (1995), p. 801.



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### Perioperative Liaison Purpose

- ✓ Include family in the care of their loved one during perioperative phase of care
- ✓ Improve communication with family through regular updates on loved ones status thereby facilitating a positive experience at HHSC
- ✓ Facilitate emotional support
- ✓ Offer information about hospital
- ✓ Promote family and surgeon communication



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### RNAO: Best Practice Guidelines Supporting & Strengthening Families Through Expected & Unexpected Life Events

1. Assess Family Need
2. Sustain a caring environment
3. Identify resources & support
4. Educate & provide information




[http://www.rnao.org/bestpractices/PDF/BPG\\_Family.pdf](http://www.rnao.org/bestpractices/PDF/BPG_Family.pdf)

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### SNL Pilot Project Overview

- Initiated as a six month pilot project to establish and develop the role of the SNL at HHSC
- Project length October 1/05-March 31/06
- Feedback from major stakeholders including patients, families, staff
  - pre-liaison phase, 3, 6 mo., & 1 year pulse checks
- SNL provided intraoperative progress reports to waiting family members of target group



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### Liaison Tracking Slips

**ATTENTION**

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_  
*Liaison Tracking Information Slip*

Patient Name \_\_\_\_\_

Family Spokesperson (include Surname): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

In Hospital: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Waiting Room: HIU/OR \_\_\_\_\_ ICU \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone or Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Liaison Nurse: Denise Connie Trish  
 Hours: 0900-1700  
 Contact Pager # 4069



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### Pre-Liaison Phase, Summary Staff (n=59)

- ✓ Likert scale surveys used to determine staff attitudes pertaining to family needs during surgery
- ✓ Overwhelming support for regular progress reports as being important to waiting families
  - 80%-97% of staff stated that it was very important for family members to:
    - Have their questions answered, speak to the surgeon immediately post-op, be notified of intraoperative changes, receive intraoperative progress reports and to see their loved one post operatively.




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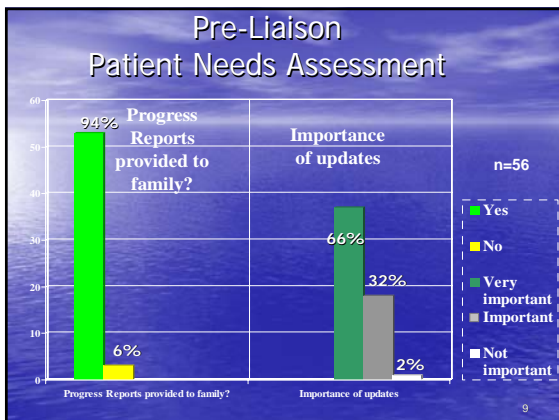
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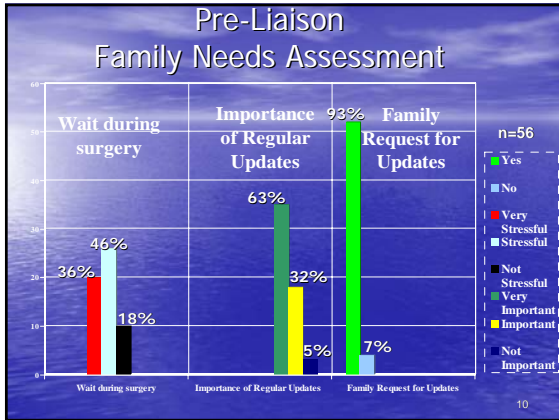
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### Three Month Pulse Check Liaison Pilot Phase Family Survey Results

- Began collection since first day of SNL role implementation
- Initial results were consistent with results obtained at the end of the pilot project
  - Early results indicated strong support for role and positive experiences by families
  - Real sense that families wished to have the role continued at HGH



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### Three Month Pulse Check SNL Pilot Phase Patient Feedback Survey

- January 2006
- Survey SDH Patient Survey (n=28)
  - ✓ 96% provision of updates to family decreased the patient's anxiety
  - ✓ 100% felt knowledge that their family has been informed during surgery has enhanced experience at HGH & would like the Liaison role to continue



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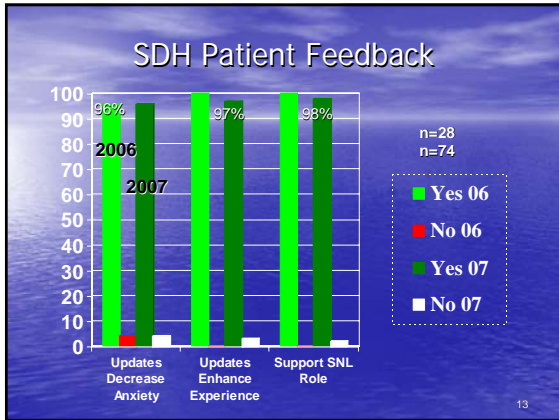
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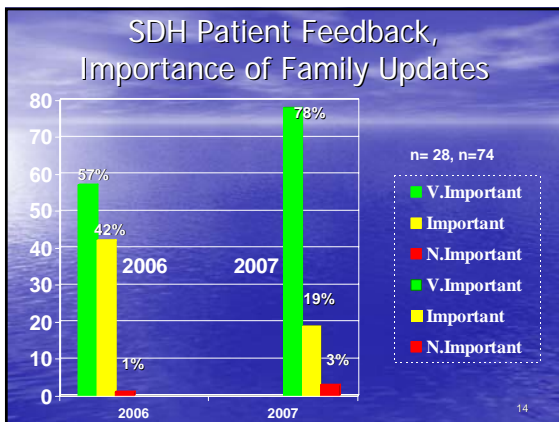
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- ### Pulse Check 2006 OR Staff Comments
- ✓ SNL Role benefits families waiting during long cases
  - ✓ Observation of surgeon participation-excellent
  - ✓ Definite positive impact on families
  - ✓ Patients also inquiring about their family members
  - ✓ Excellent opportunity for teaching, positive initiative for HHSC.
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### Pulse Check 2006 PACU Staff Feedback

- ✓ Decreases in the overall number of unexpected visitors in PACU
- ✓ Significant drop in the number of telephone calls into PACU from waiting family members...leaving staff to take care of patients
- ✓ Staff group showed the largest increase of support of the development of SNL role



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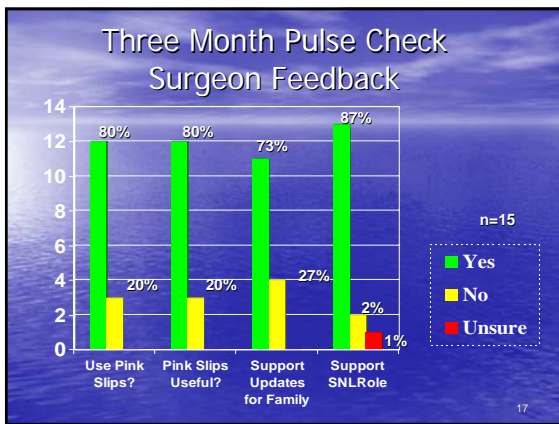
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### Surgeon Feedback

- ✓ I have received unsolicited positive feedback from families-role softens the blow of imminent bad news-organizes post op discussion-actually saves me time
- ✓ Liaison role fosters good relations with families
- ✓ Very good for public relations
- ✓ Helps to when I miss family in between surgeries
- ✓ I find families less anxious when I speak with them post operatively
- ✓ It's wonderful



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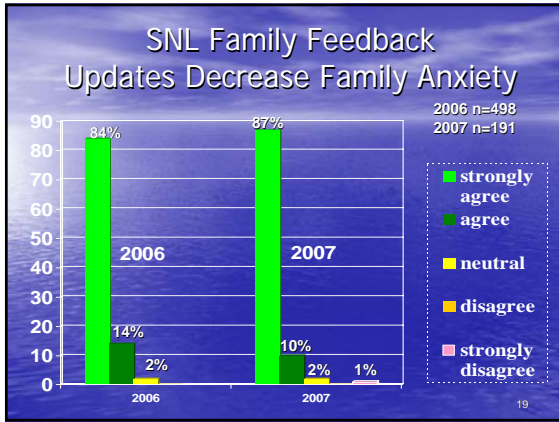
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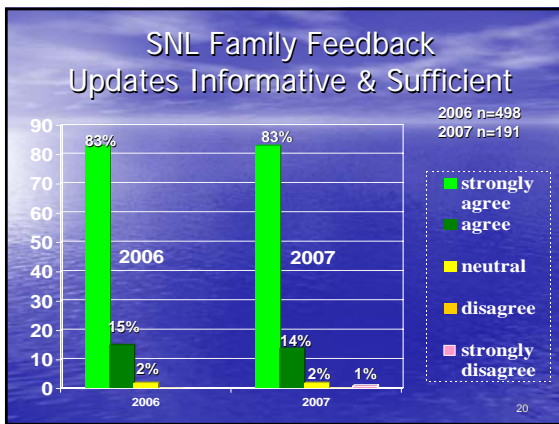
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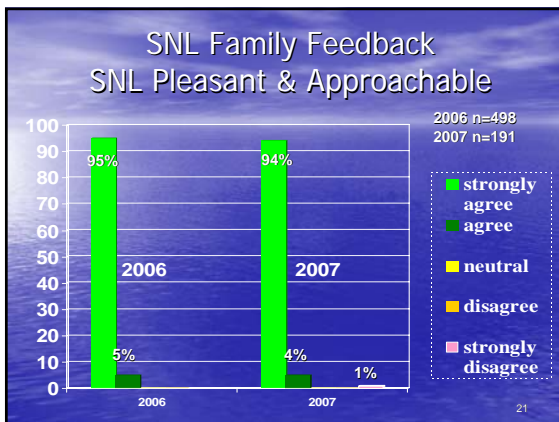
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## SNL Family Comments

- ✓ Vital and informative role in the care and support to our family. An exceptional role that in our experience was executed by an exceptional health care professional
- ✓ This is one of the most important services that has ever been offered since my mother's ordeal with cancer. We have never felt so empowered and at ease than we did today... just by being informed
- ✓ What a great idea. Thank you. At one of life's most difficult times, it's great to have a guide to help lessen our anxiety and bring us information. This is an excellent service to enhance patient & family experience during a trying time



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## Impressions So Far....Patients & Families

- Overwhelming support from families and patients with evidence that role has had a positive impact on lowering anxiety while enhancing their experience at HHSC
- Patients and their families identified a need for SLN prior to the launch of role and continue to strongly support this role



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## Staff in SDS, OR, PACU....

- Staff groups embrace and support this initiative
- Staff have adjusted to presence of liaison in OR....most are very helpful to provide information as required to assist in role implementation and development
- Several suggestions for back up person to cover absences as well as to provide service to meet the needs of families on shift/weekends



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### What has happened so far...

- ✓ Facilitate cancellation process
- ✓ Public Relations role
- ✓ Extra pair of skilled perioperative hands to available for urgent cases
- ✓ Provide communication link with families of inpatients and trauma families
- ✓ Promotes involvement of support team members such as chaplain, social work



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### ...so far...

- ✓ Fosters teambuilding among staff through communication (SDS-OR)
- ✓ Establishes networks between areas, HIU, SDS, ICU and OR
- ✓ Map of third floor in limited circulation
- ✓ Expands the role of perioperative nurse through the establishment of therapeutic relationships
- ✓ Puts a familiar face on the OR which humanizes the OR environment



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### Future Indications at HHSC

- Elective surgery initially in order to set up program and establish SNL role
- However, emergent cases on shift and weekend would benefit most from improved communication when support services are not as accessible
  - Plan to develop a tool to capture this group, perhaps utilizing evening shift charge nurse



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## Pearls of Wisdom

- ✓ Select the right person
  - ✓ experience, passion & personality
- ✓ Rotate Perioperative Nurses in role
  - ✓ Maintain OR skills
  - ✓ Facilitates OR Team to include SNL
  - ✓ Emotionally taxing in full time capacity
- ✓ Build support through Champion for your cause
  - ✓ Nursing Management
  - ✓ Site chief of staff
  - ✓ Leadership of Service Resource Nurses



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## Final Thoughts

*We at Hamilton Health Sciences are  
Lighting the way by recognizing that a  
few compassionate words can provide a  
great deal of comfort.*



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*Thank-you for  
your time  
&  
Have a great day*



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## References

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