

Raise a Flag, Here Comes (Another) Change

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Background

When a critical or rapid change/update in nursing/midwifery practice or knowledge is required across a large organisation, communication to ward based staff can be problematic and sporadic. There are occasions when nurse leaders need assurance that a large workforce receive those critical updates that can impact on patient and staff safety in a methodical and timely manner.

Aim/Purpose of the project

Fiona Stanley Fremantle Hospital Group have implemented an organisational wide communication method known as the Priority Flag ALERT System. The Priority Flag ALERT System is triggered to raise a P Flag to draw attention to new/updated process, practice or policy that requires a response eg change in practice or process.

Methods/Process

A Priority Flag activates associated tasks across the organisation according to the priority of action needed. Once a P Flag ALERT is deployed, an area is to follow local mechanisms to bring about change or provide updates to all affected staff. There are three levels of Priority Flag ALERTs (P1, P2, P3) which relate to significance of the change/ update, with a P1 ALERT highlighting the most significant change that requires an immediate response. Each P Flag has tasks to be actioned when a Priority Flag ALERT has been activated. Responses to the P Flags are tracked at either organisational level, as the case is for P1, or at service level as is the case for P2 and P3.

Results/Outcome

The P Flag system has successfully become the mainstay of communication with the Nursing and Midwifery Service using recognisable badging and response mechanisms. It has recently begun to be utilised by multidisciplinary groups to also convey important messages to nursing and midwifery staff regarding change across the organisation that impacts on clinical care. The majority of Flags are P2 with 23 P2s issued in 2018. The tracking and if necessary, reporting on responses to the P Flag, is streamlined and easy to deploy.