

# Limited Code Blue OR: Improving Intraoperative Resuscitation

Tara McCray, BSN, RN, CNOR & Renee Wong, RN, CPAN

St. Joseph Medical Center, Tacoma, WA



## Objective & Background

Gaps in care delivery and standard protocols resulted in chaotic intraoperative resuscitation events, undesired outcomes, and staff distress. A critical need for change was recognized and an interdisciplinary team was formed with the goal of improving intraoperative resuscitation.

## Implementation

### Resuscitation Support

- Collaborative interdisciplinary response initiated by standardized call for "Limited Code Blue, OR \_\_\_\_"
- Activation of experienced Code RN, pharmacist, and additional anesthesiologist

### Structured Education & Training

- Hands-on annual OR-specific mock code
- Tiered inclusion of ACLS training, prioritizing Charge RNs and Resource RNs
- Role delineation
- Code debrief emphasis

## Method

### Interdisciplinary Team

Perioperative Director,  
Managers, & Educators  
Anesthesiology  
Pharmacy  
Inpatient Code Team



### Issue Identification

Medications not delivered in a timely manner  
Many team members lacked BLS and/or ACLS proficiency  
Availability of PACU RNs to respond to intraoperative codes not guaranteed  
Hesitation to activate pre-existing "Code Blue" response  
Culture of perioperative self-sufficiency  
Concerns regarding increased OR traffic and unnecessary contamination

### Planning

Proposing an OR-specific code response, limited to key team members  
Regional policy review and revision  
Initiation of perioperative "First 3 Minutes" code response training  
OR tour and orientation for code response team members  
New process created and validated for OR-specific code notification

## Conclusion

A focus on improving outcomes for our patients resulted in a culture shift from self-sufficiency to a collaborative intraoperative resuscitation approach. With the implementation of the Limited Code Blue OR initiative, OR traffic was limited, but still allowed for crucial support from an experienced Code RN, pharmacist, and an additional anesthesiologist. The initiation of the Limited Code Blue OR and continued education has provided the specialized support, skills, and knowledge necessary to make an impact on improving our resuscitation response.

## Future Work & Acknowledgements

The Limited Code Blue OR initiative is still in its infancy stage, but continues to gain momentum. 5 Limited Code Blue OR responses were called in 2021. Over the next year, we will collect data and continue to reinforce staff education with hands-on training and code debriefs.

Special thanks to the St. Joseph Medical Center (SJMC) Inpatient Code Team, Pacific Anesthesia, Chris Peredney, Perioperative Services, and the SJMC Perioperative Leadership Team for your collaboration and assistance in bringing this initiative to life.