New Standard Operating Procedures for Advanced Booking of Surgeries & OR Block Releases

The following new standard operating procedures (SOP) regarding the advanced booking of surgeries and OR block releases are effective June 6, 2024.

- Elective patients must be booked in Novari **a minimum of 14 calendar days in advance of the scheduled OR block at the Victoria General Hospital (VG) and Halifax Infirmary (HI) and a minimum of 28 calendar days, in advance of the scheduled OR block at Dartmouth General Hospital (DGH) and Hants Community Hospital (Hants), except for extenuating circumstances.**
- If surgeon's offices do not have patients booked in Novari a minimum of 14 days (VG & HI)/28 days (DGH & Hants) ahead of their scheduled block, **the surgeon's block time will be released and re-assigned. Patients currently booked will be cancelled by the surgeon's office.** Exceptions apply to specific services.
- If a patient's surgery date is unknown but the surgeon plans to operate on the patient within the next three months, the patient should be booked in Novari as early as possible, using December 25th as the surgical date.
- If surgeons will not be using their assigned OR time**, the OR block must be released a minimum of 14 days (VG & HI)/28 days (DGH & Hants) in advance**, except for extenuating circumstances.

Please ensure that you, and your office Administrative Staff:

- Carefully review the attached SOPs for detailed information.
- Regularly check your NSHealth email accounts.
- Remember that a booking WILL NOT be processed until up-to-date and complete booking packages are uploaded.

Why Are We Formalizing These Procedures?

The goal of formalizing these procedures is to enhance our efficiency, reduce delays, and improve OR utilization and enhance the overall patient experience. The reasons for initiating this pilot project are:

Advanced Booking:

- Advanced booking processes vary and are not consistently followed by surgeon offices. Last minute bookings result in case delays, late starts, and same day cancellations, often due to patients not being seen in the Perioperative Anesthesia Clinic (PAC).
- This SOP ensures that all elective surgical candidates can receive appropriate preoperative care, to improve perioperative efficiency and maximize OR utilization.
- Three of the top ten reasons for same day cancellations may be avoidable if patients are seen in the PAC in advance.

OR ‘Give Backs’:

- Short notice OR ‘give backs,’ or releases, waste valuable resources and leads to underutilized OR blocks.
- This SOP procedure enables OR managers to re-assign blocks to other surgeons in a timely manner, to enable other providers to utilize available surgical time.

How Will We Implement This Change?

1. Effective June 6, 2024, OR block schedules will be monitored by the Booking Office. Booking Officers will begin notifying Administrative Staff and Surgeons of offices that do not have patients booked in Novari for OR blocks 48 hours ahead of the 14 day (VG & HI)/28 day (DGH & Hants) cut off, from the start date (June 24, 2024).
2. Department/Division Heads will receive the first OR block email notification of under booked time on June 10, 2024, for OR Blocks scheduled for June 24, 2024.
3. From June 10 to July 5, 2024 (the first 4 weeks of implementation), Surgeons (with the exceptions of some services) who do not have at least 75% of their block scheduled 14 days (VG & HI)/28 days (DGH & Hants) prior will receive a warning from their Department/Division Head. Upon a second offence, the OR block will be reassigned.
4. Starting July 8, 2024, the SOP will be in full effect.

How Will We Measure Impact?

Advanced Booking:

- # / % of OR blocks that are not booked at least 14 days in advance of the scheduled time
- Qualitative Physician & Staff Feedback

OR ‘Give Backs’:

- OR ‘Give Backs’ (This data will be collected by the OR mangers at the time of OR block release – note that this data will be considered in determining future block allocation to services and future surgeon scheduling.)
- OR Block Utilization
- Qualitative Physician & Staff Feedback

Your cooperation in implementing these changes is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or require further clarification regarding the new procedures, please do not hesitate to contact your manager, Department/Division Head or Megan Arsenault (OR Efficiency Project Manager, Megan.Arsenault@nshealth.ca). Thank you for your attention to this matter and dedication to improving patient care in Nova Scotia.