The Problem

- Patients frequently arrive in Radiology via stretcher and are unable to independently move from stretcher to exam/procedure table. This resulted in the need for Radiology staff to lift, pull or slide patients onto exam/procedure table using a slideboard.
- In areas that “no lift” equipment was available, it was found to be under utilized.
- Investigation into the reason why “no lift” equipment was under utilized revealed patients who would benefit from this equipment were arriving in Radiology without a green lifting sheet place under them.
- Additional concerns were expressed that placing a green lifting sheet under a patient while on a stretcher increases risk of injury to both patient and staff. Stretchers simply do not have enough real estate to safely maneuver patients to place a lifting sheet.

Aim/Goal

- Decrease staff/patient risk of injury when transferring patient to and from stretcher by increasing use of “no lift” equipment for patient who are unable to independently move from bed/stretcher to exam/procedure table.
- Decrease the number of patients who would benefit from “no lift” equipment but did not arrive in Radiology with a green lifting sheet in place.

The Interventions

- QA Nurse queried staff to understand the barriers to using lifting equipment.
- To understand the scope of the problem, Radiology Transporters tracked the number of patients arriving in Radiology who were unable to independently move from bed/stretcher to exam/procedure table and did not have a green sheet placed under them.
- Radiology Transport Supervisor, QA Nurse and Safe Patient Handling met to brainstorm solutions for ensuring a green lifting sheet is under all patients needing one.
- Solution: Patients that are unable to independently transfer to stretcher from their inpatient bed are identified by Radiology Transporters at the time of pickup. Transporter confirms with inpatient staff the appropriateness of lifting sheet use for each patient. If no contraindication, Transporters place a green lifting sheet onto the stretcher prior to transferring patient.
- All Transporters were trained in the use of “no lift” equipment.

The Results/Progress to Date

Average daily number of patients arriving in Radiology who could benefit from using “no lift” equipment but do not have a green sheet in place.

Lessons Learned

Go to gemba. Prior to our staff query we speculated that the causative agent might be a need for staff education, a resistance to use or even a lack of knowledge in how to use the equipment; in the end, the impediment was staff did not have the necessary equipment in place when they needed it and no process in place to correct.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

Analysis of the current use of “no lift” equipment post change.

For More Information Contact
Suzanne Swedeen RN MSN CNIV
Quality Improvement Specialist, Department of Radiology
sswdeeen@bidmc.harvard.edu