

Implementation of Virtual Preoperative Evaluation during a Pandemic

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Background

- Preadmission testing (PAT) visits have historically been conducted in-person and or via phone calls (remote) facilitated by Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and Registered Nurses (RNs)
- Geographically diverse patient population (national and International)
- Depending on procedure, patients often had to make several trips to the Boston area prior to surgery

Local Problem

- Due to the pandemic, a change in process was required to address national and state social distancing recommendations

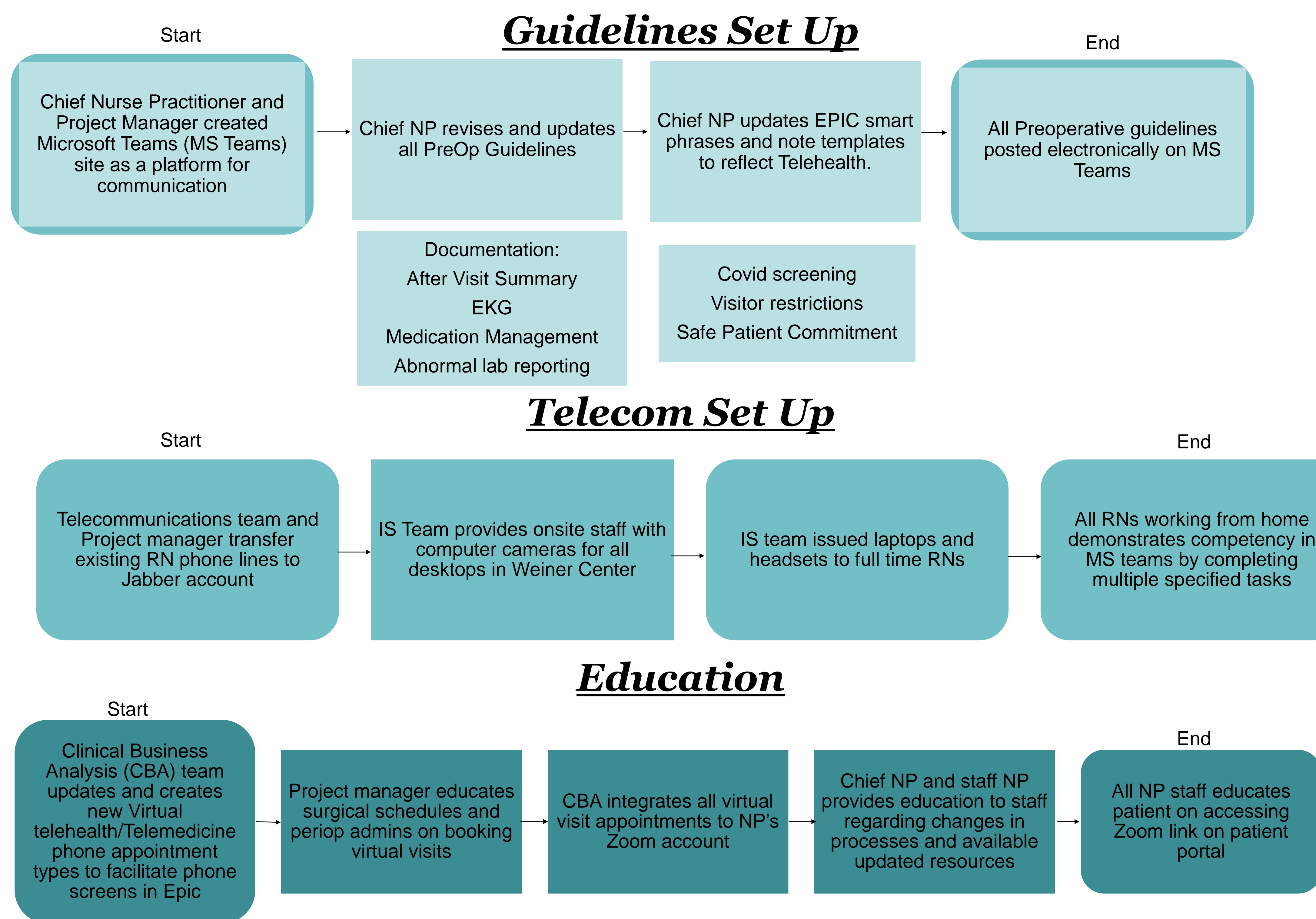
Setting

- 171-bed Magnet® designated community teaching hospital partner of Brigham and Women's Hospital located in Boston, MA
- Member of the Mass General Brigham integrated healthcare system
- FY21: 11,732 surgical procedures
 - NPs/RNs in PAT conduct pre-procedure phone screens for patients receiving anesthesia in the ambulatory setting

Project Objective

- To implement a smooth transition from onsite preoperative evaluations via phone or in-person visits, to 100% virtual visits

Process



Outcomes

- By November 2020, 100% of all preoperative visits were conducted remotely by RNs or virtual visits by NPs
- In early 2022, 99% of visits remain remote or virtual
 - On rare occasions, selected patients are seen for an in-person visit (i.e., difficult airway, patient complexity, or request from anesthesia services)
- PAT staff are utilizing a messaging app for internal communication about patient concerns, clinical questions, and staff work schedule
- Staff feedback:
 - RN feedback has been overwhelmingly positive about working from home
 - NP feedback: Positive – improved patient satisfaction; Concerns – miss the opportunity to conduct in person physical assessment

Implications

- Perianesthesia nurses are change agents who are well positioned to address the long-standing concerns surrounding location and availability for preoperative visits.
- For clinicians, using a collaborative chat-based platform that includes the ability to share and store documents, provides clinicians with access to the most current clinical information about patients enabling them to integrate care efforts.
- Implementing the use of telehealth technology is an innovative strategy that improves access to care and provides greater flexibility for both patients and clinicians ensuring the delivery of high quality, safe patient centered care.

Next Steps

- Develop a pathway to identify patients requiring in person visits.
- Collaborate with information services to identify strategies to seamlessly integrate documents into the electronic health record that are easily retrievable.

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