

# Enriching Perioperative Communication Through Family Texting

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## Background

- The World Health Organization (2019) recommends use of digital technologies for targeted communications that enhances the delivery of health care.
- Surgery produces anxiety for patients and their family/support person (Dippre et al., 2022).
- The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated anxiety with regulations limiting visitor presence in the perianesthesia area.

## Problem

- Limited communication between the perianesthesia staff and families and/or support person during surgical procedure increased anxiety.

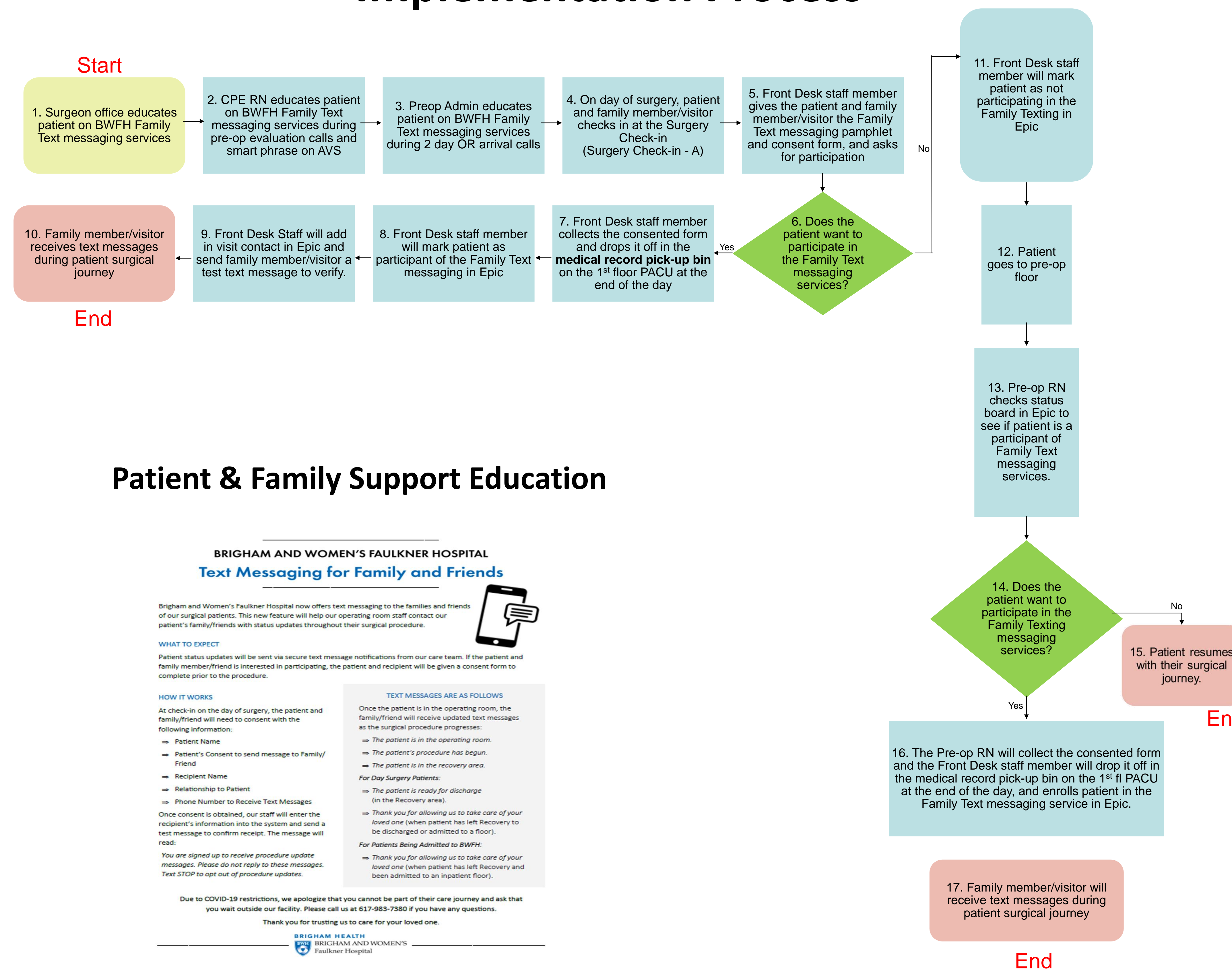
## Setting

- A 171-bed community hospital in the northeast United States completing over 11,750 surgeries per year.

## Project Objective

- To implement one-way communication utilizing existing technology (Short Message Service [SMS]) available in the health record to alleviate patient, family and/or support person anxiety.

## Implementation Process



## Patient & Family Support Education

BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S FAULKNER HOSPITAL  
Text Messaging for Family and Friends

Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital now offers text messaging to the families and friends of our surgical patients. This new feature will help our operating room staff contact our patient's family/friends with status updates throughout their surgical procedure.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**  
Patient status updates will be sent via secure text message notifications from our care team. If the patient and family member/friend is interested in participating, the patient and recipient will be given a consent form to complete prior to the procedure.

**HOW IT WORKS**  
At check-in on the day of surgery, the patient and family/friend will need to consent with the following information:  
 - Recipient Name  
 - Relationship to Patient  
 - Phone Number to Receive Text Messages  
 Once consent is obtained, our staff will enter the recipient's information into the system and send a test message to confirm receipt. The message will read:  
 You are signed up to receive procedure update messages. Please do not reply to these messages. Text STOP to opt out of procedure updates.

**TEXT MESSAGES ARE AS FOLLOWS**  
Once the patient is in the operating room, the family/friend will receive updated text messages as the surgical procedure progresses:  
 - The patient is in the operating room.  
 - The patient's procedure has begun.  
 - The patient is in the recovery area.  
**For Day Surgery Patients:**  
 - The patient is ready for discharge (in the Recovery area).  
 - Thank you for allowing us to take care of your loved one (when patient has left Recovery to be discharged or admitted to a floor).  
**For Patients Being Admitted to BWFH:**  
 - Thank you for allowing us to take care of your loved one (when patient has left Recovery and been admitted to an inpatient floor).

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we apologize that you cannot be part of their care journey and ask that you wait outside our facility. Please call us at 617-983-7380 if you have any questions.  
Thank you for trusting us to care for your loved one.

BRIGHAM HEALTH  
BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S  
Faulkner Hospital

## Patient Satisfaction Survey Results

- Pre/post perioperative patient satisfaction scores consistently exceed national benchmarks
- Since implementation of family texting, there has been an increase in the number of positive comments on the patient satisfaction surveys:
  - "The new family texting is a wonderful feature and kept my very anxious family at ease."
  - "The text messages were a great comfort to my family."
  - "My family was very pleased with the family texting as they could not be at the hospital due to COVID"
  - "I did not have anyone wait for me. I did like the texting updates to my family member"



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## Statement of Successful Practice

- Since August 2020, family texting has been successfully implemented with an enrollment rate of 85% or higher.
- As a result, there has been a decrease in phone calls from families/support person to the perianesthesia unit, leading to increased unit efficiency and increased time for the nurse at the patient's bedside.
- Anecdotal feedback from patients and support person, as well as results from patient satisfaction surveys, has shown that concerns related to surgery has been reduced.

## Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing

- Family texting can be an effective component of perianesthesia communication between clinical nurses and families/support persons.
- Perianesthesia nurses are essential drivers of development and implementation of innovative technologies to improve care for patients as well as their families and/or support person.