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## Evans OR recognized for medication safety

By Jeff Troth, MEDDAC PAO

The Evans Army Community Hospital operating room staff was recognized by Army Medicine for an initiative to reduce the chance of post-operation medications reacting with medications the patient is already taking.

U.S. Army Medicine named Evans OR the 2016 winner of the Medication Reconciliation Improvement/Innovation Award in October. The Army Patient Safety Program sponsored the contest to recognize the great work being conducted in Army medical facilities across the world.

“We won the award because of a patient safety initiative that we implemented in the OR,” said Maj. Jesus Chavez, Clinical Nurse officer in charge of the Evans’ operating room. “We had a system in place to ensure medication reconciliation, but this process streamlined what we were doing.”

Chavez said that medication reconciliation is important because some patients have several doctors who prescribe medications for a specific injury or illness. And while the individual medication does what it is supposed to, different medication combinations can have adverse effects on the patient.

“When you send the patient home after surgery, you put them on a certain medication,” said Chavez. “And you want to make sure that they are not already on a medication that is going to interact negatively with what you prescribe them.”

For this reason, Department of Surgery’s Capt. Sarah Weir came up with a process where a patient’s pre-operative nurse is responsible for medication reconciliation. Prior to going into surgery an assessment is made of the patient’s record and if the medication reconciliation is not complete, the patient doesn’t go into surgery until the surgeon completes the chart.

When the new process began in February, 26 percent of patient charts had unreconciled medications prior to their surgery. Three months later the OR staff had reduced that number to four percent.

“The great thing is that my staff came up with this solution. I mentioned my concern about the number of incomplete charts to them and one of my nurses came up with the idea and she ran with it,” said Chavez. “This shows the quality of the staff we have here and how they are willing to go that extra mile to do what is right to improve patient safety.”



Maj. Jesus Chavez (far right) and some of the Evans Army Community Hospital operating room staff huddle around the Medication Reconciliation Improvement/Innovation Award they won. (Photo by Jeff Troth)