Improving NICU Referrals to the Missouri Early Intervention Program (First Steps)

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Background
- First Steps is the statewide early intervention program in Missouri.
- There are specific eligibility criteria for patient’s to qualify.
- Some patients are eligible based on criteria identified in the NICU.
- Review of referrals from the Truman NICU revealed that only 24% of eligible patients were being referred.

Criteria
Patients born less than 1,500 grams with at least one of the following:
- APGAR ≤ 6 at 5 minutes.
- Intraventricular hemorrhage (Grade II, III, or IV).
- Any positive pressure ventilation greater than 48 hours.
- Resuscitation/code-event requiring chest compressions.

Aim
- To increase the number of appropriate referrals from the Truman NICU to the First Steps Program.
- Increase resident discussion and awareness of early intervention referrals during discharge.

Intervention
1. Include First Steps information as part of the monthly resident orientation.
2. Include referral to First Steps as part of the resident discharge checklist.
3. Display a sign of criteria in the physician/NP work area.

Results
Percent of Referrals Made for Eligible Patients 2016-Present

Act: Changes to be adopted in the NICU while continuing to monitor results.
Plan: Increase referrals to ≥75% with the interventions listed.
Study: Since implementation of interventions, there has been a 100% referral rate.
Do: Interventions have been implemented and data is being collected.