

# CPI PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

January 2017



## ICU-to-OR Handoff project led by Drs. Patricia Kritek and John Lang

Dr. Patricia Kritek and Dr. John Lang are working to increase patient safety by creating a Handoff Checklist for the ICU-to-OR handoff process after the most recent Culture of Safety Survey at UWMC identified communication during transitions of care as a critical area for improvement.

In addition to attending to the intricacies of process workflows and logistics, Drs. Kritek and Lang recognized a key ingredient – championship for change. They invested their time and passion by identifying and meeting the key leadership stakeholders for the roles needed at this transition handoff. This involved personally meeting with each surgery division chief whose team would be engaged in this standardized handoff to learn their views and secure their support in moving forward.



“I believe the ICU-to-OR handoff process is extremely valuable for ensuring excellent patient care. It builds upon and is a natural extension of our system of communication,” said Dr. Aaron Cheng, surgical co-director of the UWMC cardiothoracic ICU.

“Importantly, it emphasizes a standardized process to convey key clinical information among interdisciplinary team members who care for our medical center’s most critically ill and vulnerable patients. It wasn’t all that long ago that we implemented a standardized process for OR-to-ICU handoffs-- while it took a lot of leadership and stakeholder buy in, it is now a part of our culture and we expect it to be part of our ICU care. I expect implementation of this ICU-to-OR process will also soon become the same.”

The Handoff Checklist was drafted by an interdisciplinary workgroup team that included representation of the patient experience. The ICU-to-OR team is currently planning their kickoff date and are looking forward to the improved patient safety outcomes that will come from this continuing cycle of improvement. This project has not progressed without challenges, but these leaders in Care Transformation have set the example for adapting to challenges with creativity and determination.

“If the plan doesn't work, change the plan but NEVER the goal,” said Dr. Lang. “We are here every day to provide safe and compassionate care, so everything we do each day has that goal in mind.”