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Can you suggest some key words to improve bed turnover?***Question***

Our facility is small (38 beds), so bed turnover is very important. There are times when we desperately need a bed and we have a patient who is ready to go home, but wants to stay for dinner . . . or one who is waiting for a ride home . . . or one whose baby is in the NICU. How can we use key words at these key times to ask such a patient to give up his room for someone else?

Answer

The first place to use key words is at admission. Explain to the patient and his or her family that your goal is a safe and effective discharge. Throughout the stay, use the goal of the patient leaving as a sign that he or she is getting better. The emphasis is not on giving up a bed, but on becoming well in order to go home.

You may also want to explain to the patient and family that by discharging from the hospital when it is appropriate, they have provided a bed for someone in more need than they are. Include the fact that you will be calling the patient at home to make sure all is well. This phone call will make a big difference. However, if the patient and family are still uneasy, arrange a nursing home visit by a visiting nurse association during the first 72 hours.

Also, providing a checklist of things to do prior to discharge is key for the patient. You can begin referencing this (and discussing a targeted discharge date) early in the hospital stay.