

## Starting a Sharps Safety Program in the Surgical Department: A Quality Improvement Project

### **Abstract**

Secondary to the use of sharps devices for procedures, staff members in the surgical departments are at higher risk for sharps injuries (SI), increasing their risk of exposure to blood borne pathogens (BBP) from body fluid exposure (CDC, 2016). Quality improvement (QI) methodology, when implemented can narrow knowledge gaps, reducing sharps injuries. This QI project's intent was to develop a sharps safety program which would educate staff members about current sharps safety laws mandated by OSHA and introduce safety engineered sharps devices. A pre and post sharps safety survey was emailed to staff members to measure knowledge and practice prior to project initiation. A pre and posttest measuring knowledge was built in the education presentation assigned to each surgical staff member. The results from the surveys indicated a knowledge gap of sharps safety and handling. There was no comprehensive sharps handling policy in place. At the end of the project implementation, the results of the pre and post test showed a 36% improvement in knowledge. This quality improvement project will be a sustainable, evolving, and comprehensive tool that can be utilized by the education team at this hospital to improve gaps in knowledge and reduce SI, and risk for BBP exposures.