Guided PIP Worksheet
Improving Timeouts Prior to Spinal Procedures

Plan: Identify an area in your practice that needs improvement.

What is the problem you are trying to solve?
Research has demonstrated that pre-procedure timeouts decrease procedure-related errors. Describe the current timeout process in your practice and how often it is implemented.

What data (objective measurements) do you have that supports this as a problem?
Do a chart review of all spinal procedures in the last few months (timeframe dependent on the size of your practice and number of patients per week); record what percentage of the time pre-procedure timeouts occur.

What is your opportunity statement? State the goal you hope to achieve.
Based on record review or collection, determine by how much you want to improve use of pre-procedure timeouts and in what timeframe. *Example: "We aim to improve the rate of timeouts in the practice to 80% within 2 months."*

What is the underlying cause of the performance/quality problem?
Gather and brainstorm with other physicians and staff on your unit/team. What's causing this issue? How did you determine the cause?

What Institute of Medicine (IOM) Quality Dimensions will be addressed by your project?
Patient Safety | Equitability in Care | Care Delivery Efficiency | Timeliness in Care | Care Delivery Effectiveness

Do: Describe the desired outcomes and the requirements needed to achieve them.

What change(s) did you implement?
You can implement just one change, or you can choose to do several at a time. To increase timeouts, you could:
- Develop a written checklist
- Assign one dedicated staff member to calling the timeout; physician verbally confirms timeout and checklist content

Study: Describe the measurements used to assess the success of the plan.

Did you achieve your goal or target reported in your opportunity statement? What data do you have to support your conclusion?
This is a simple yes or no, and cite the evidence. After the timeframe indicated in your opportunity statement, review your performance. (It's good practice to check-in at least midway through your project, too, to see whether adjustments need to be made.) Has the pre-procedure timeout been implemented/rate improved? By how much? Does that meet the goal you set?
Example: Yes, we met our goal. After two weeks, review indicated timeout rate was at 70%. Team identified documentation of the timeout as an opportunity; one dedicated staff assigned to document. At 1 month, timeouts at 80%; at 2 months, timeouts at 90%.

Act: Change(s) to your practice as a result of this project.

Will you continue with the changes you have implemented?
If you achieved your goal, describe how you will sustain your success, or how it led to new ideas. If you did not achieve your goal, how could you try again with new tactics? What will be your next process change to keep the improvement evolution going?
Example: The team was committed to achieve and sustain a rate of timeouts at 100%. Analysis indicated that further gains are likely if only one staff is responsible for both calling and documenting the timeout. We implemented this change and after 2 weeks, the timeout rate was 100%.