National Patient Safety Goals: FAQ's

Goal 3.04.01: Medication Labeling in Perioperative and Procedural Areas

1. **Does the requirement to label medications only apply to the operating room?** No. The requirement applies to all surgical and procedural areas that use medications or solutions. Examples include radiology, imaging services, endoscopy units, cardiac catherization lab, EP lab.

2. **What information should be on the labels?**
   - Drug name
   - Strength
   - Quantity
   - Diluent and volume (if not apparent from container)
   - Expiration date when not used within 24 hours
   - Expiration time when expiration occurs in less than 24 hours
   Note: the date and time are not necessary for short procedures as defined by the hospital.

3. **Are there exceptions to the labeling?** Yes, if the medication is drawn up and immediately administered with no intervening step or break in the process, labeling is not required.

4. **If a clinician draws up two medications into two separate syringes, then administers both medications, do the syringes need to be labeled?** Yes

5. **What is the procedure when the person preparing the medication or solution is not the person who will be administering it?** Two individuals should verify the medication or solution labels both verbally and visually.

6. **What should be done with medications or solutions found unlabeled?** They should be discarded immediately.

7. **When should I discard labeled containers on the sterile field?**
   You should discard labeled containers at the end of the procedure. Note: This does not apply to multiuse vials that are handled according to infection control practices.

8. **What is the procedure when staff who are responsible for the management of medications changes e.g. change of shift?**
   Entering and exiting staff should review all medications and solutions both on and off the sterile filed.

9. **How will the Joint Commission surveyor evaluate our compliance with labeling**
   o **Observe** if possible
   o **Ask** when you label and what is included on the label.