

IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

Culture change is never easy. But that did not deter Jen Kyle, BAN, RN, and her colleagues on Children's Nursing Health and Safety Committee.

Kyle, a tri-chair for the Minnesota Nurses Association at Children's – St. Paul, played a key role on that labor/management committee. In less than a year, the committee researched, planned, and implemented a far-reaching program that will reduce worker injuries, enhance patient safety, and likely have a spillover effect on employee retention and job satisfaction. Called the safe patient-handling initiative, it involves using patient lift equipment to safely transfer and support patients during procedures, bathing, and other activities.

The first hurdle they faced was convincing some that it was needed. "There's a mindset that since we are dealing with pediatrics, it's not an issue," says Kyle, Children's – St. Paul radiology. "But the reality is, we care for adult-size children as well as children with disabilities who can't do things for themselves."

After an internal needs assessment, research into available equipment and vendors, and logistical support from Children's biomedical, information technology, and purchasing departments, the initiative was implemented in November 2005.

"We recognize that this is not an easy change for everyone," says Kyle. She and her team are continuing to monitor feedback about the program and are committed to making it work. "But I've learned that my nurse colleagues are very willing to change if they are given good reasons and good data to support a change in practice."

Kyle believes that Children's is one of the only pediatric centers in the country to have a comprehensive, fully implemented safe patient-handling program. "We just got on the ball and kept rolling," she says.



Jen Kyle, BAN, RN