

# Utilizing a Standardized EMR Tool to Improve Hand-off Communication

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## Problem

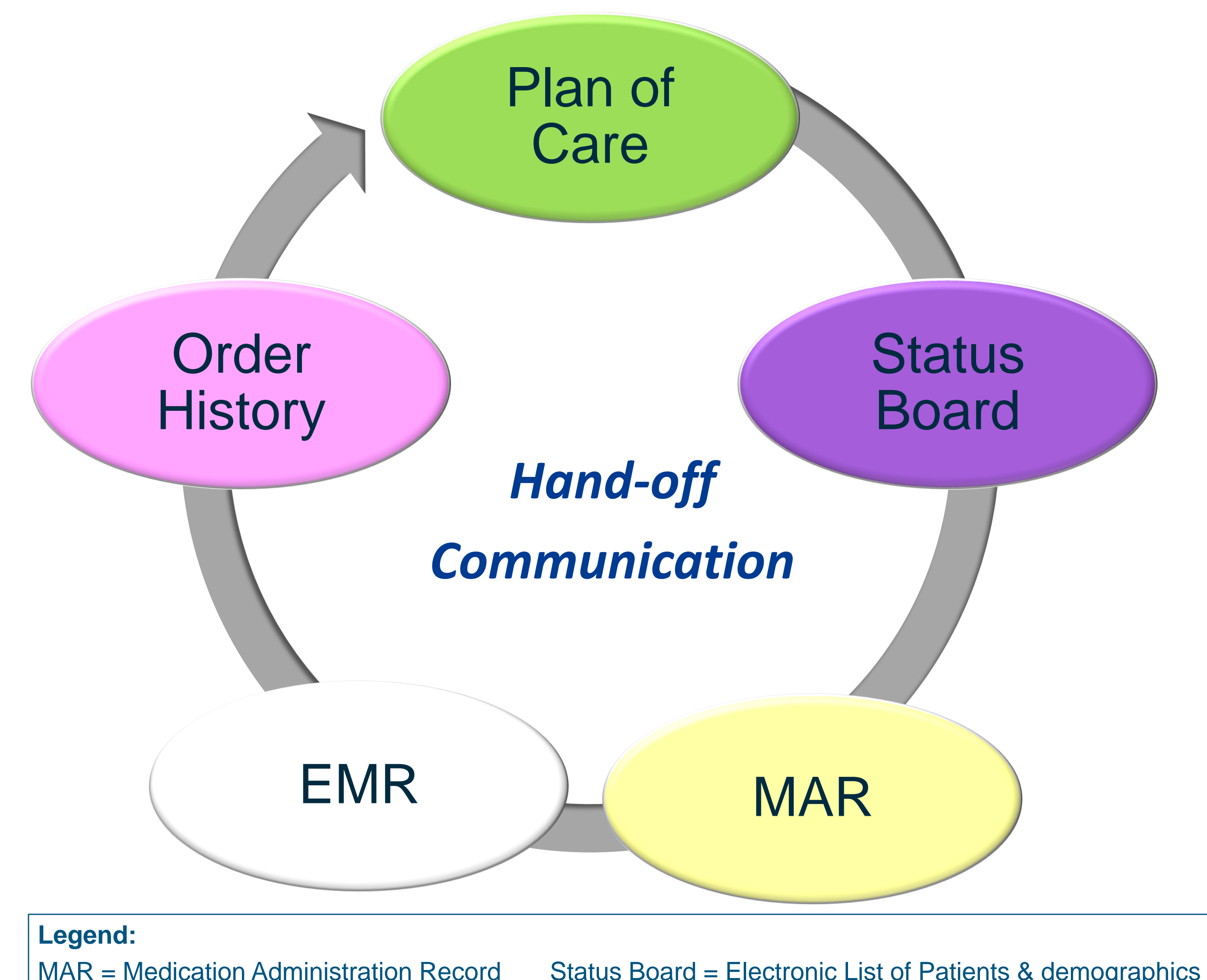
The Joint Commission mandated implementation of a standardized approach to “hand-off” communication and a process for comparing the patient’s current medications with those ordered. Nurses in a pediatric hospital identified a need for consistency during shift report to improve hand-off communication, including medication reconciliation each shift, and one that involved the families. A formal tool was recognized as essential to guide the nurses through the electronic medical record (EMR) for shift report.

## Evidence

Family-centered care is recognized as a central component of pediatric nursing. However, a literature review and conference presentation did not reveal a consistent method of utilizing the EMR to conduct shift report at the bedside and involve families.

## Strategy

A multidisciplinary task force examined processes to facilitate the accuracy of hand-off communication. A tool was developed to guide nurses to use the EMR during report. Staff attended training sessions where they learned how to give report using the EMR as well as how to involve families in the bedside shift report.



## Practice Change

Staff learned to utilize a new hand-off communication to involve families in shift report while conducting report at the bedside.

## Summary of Steps:

1. Status Board
  - \* Confirm correct patient using two identifiers
  - \* Brief description: name, age, diagnosis, allergies, weight, isolation
2. MAR
  - \* All meds signed out
  - \* Confirm IVs and rates
  - \* New & discontinued meds
3. EMR
  - \* Pertinent data specific for the patient, including reassessments
4. Order History
  - \* Outstanding & pending labs, procedures
  - \* 12-hour chart check
5. Documentation hand-off communication

## Evaluation

Discharge surveys and chart reviews were monitored pre and post-implementation of the new hand-off communication tool. Comments received from nurses and families were recorded.

## Results

Staff verbalized positive comments about the new tool to guide shift report. Nurses became more articulate using the EMR as well as adept at locating information. Families reported that they received more information and felt more involved in the plan of care when the tool was used. Recorded comments also revealed that implementation of the hand-off communication tool helped catch near misses such as missed orders, incomplete documentation, and medication changes.

## Recommendations

Based on positive evaluation results, it is recommended that a standardized approach to hand-off communication be adopted by other hospital units.

## Lessons Learned

Involving a multidisciplinary team, including unit-based council representatives, helps to facilitate a positive response to change in practice.

Content within the tool’s summary of steps can be modified depending on unit specialty.

Successful implementation is contingent on identification of barriers such as staffs’ comfort level with the EMR and giving report with patients and families present.

