Pediatric Emergencies
To be presented by:
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In the USA, many Respiratory Therapists work at hospitals that primarily take care of the adult patient population. However, many hospitals that do not have a designated pediatric ICU, nor Neonatal ICU, find themselves with babies and children coming in through the ED. A child may also have had an elective surgery at a mostly adult hospital and recover in the PACU. Although a Respiratory Therapist may have had training in all 3 patient populations (Newborn/infant, pediatric, and adult), maintaining these skills can be a challenge, especially in an emergency.

In a recent nationwide poll of RT's across the US, only 53% of respondents felt 100% confident in their ability to take care of an intubated child. 24% felt minimally prepared, but with backup help felt they could get a child stabilized. 17% felt they could stabilize a child, but still were not 100% confident in their skills.

Maintaining a skill takes repetition and practice. Maintaining pediatric critical care skills while only seeing this population once every few months presents the challenge of how to maintain an effective skillset in the event of a sick child presenting.

As a Clinical Educator, we are the backup resource when an RT is clinically unsure of their skills.
While annual skills and competency fairs are helpful, they are time and labor-intensive especially with large staffs. It was determined that RT staff need more practice with pediatric issues.
A comprehensive review of a group of RT's baseline knowledge coupled with actual code blue/white experiences prompted a course on pediatric emergencies. In this course, the RT's are walked through a sick child that presents in ED and progresses to needing intubation.
Common pediatric illnesses and emergencies are presented, plus assessment skills. Finally, choice of ventilator and ventilator settings are discussed.

Although there is no substitute for hands on practice, this course will help the learner be more confident in their clinical approach to babies and children.