



SIX TIPS TO KEEP YOUR PATIENTS SATISFIED

It turns out that communication is a common thread through most areas of the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Health Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey in which patients identify dissatisfaction. Ten of the HCAHPS questions specifically target communications. Poor communications can affect the patient experience by delaying patient admittance and discharge, and can cause a host of problems in between. Patients can receive exceptionally high-quality care, yet still be dissatisfied because of how they perceive staff are communicating (or not), even during short interactions.

In this eBrief we look at several of the patient satisfaction pain points top hospitals are focused on, and some of their approaches to tackling them.

1

GIVE PATIENTS A FAST, SMOOTH ADMITTANCE PROCESS

In many cases, admission holdups are caused by inefficient communications among all the relevant departments and staff. One of the keys to faster admissions is the ability to reach staff directly on their mobile devices, such as smartphones, pagers, tablets, Wi-Fi phones, etc.



Alert housekeeping personnel when a room is ready to be turned over for a new patient



Inform the nurse when a patient is arriving on the floor



Let transport staff know as soon as a patient is ready to be taken to a room



Ensure the admitting physician can quickly connect with the hospitalist for a hand-off conversation

2

COMMUNICATE TEST RESULTS PROMPTLY

Whether results are negative and the patient is released to go home, or a life-threatening condition is discovered, avoid wait time and help ensure ordering physicians get patient test results quickly.

CASE STUDY

Palmetto Health Tuomey in Sumter, S.C. is using a test results management system to link communications between the health information system (HIS), radiology information system (RIS), and the picture archiving and communications system (PACS). Now they are better able to facilitate follow-up on incidental findings discovered during exams. [LEARN MORE»](#)



Blood panel ordered on patient



Critically low potassium triggers alert to physician for immediate action

3

RESPOND QUICKLY TO THE PATIENT

Being a patient can make a person feel very vulnerable, especially when assistance is needed for everything from pain relief to getting a glass of water or even getting out of bed. How quickly staff respond to a patient's call for help can have a large impact on patient happiness and set the tone for their overall perception of the facility.

The Battle Against Alarm Fatigue

The Joint Commission's newest National Patient Safety Goal (NPSG 06.01.01) is to "Improve the safety of clinical alarm systems." Technology can summon clinical assistance when the patient is unable to call for help on his/her own.

During this hospital stay, after you pressed the call button, how often did you get help as soon as you wanted it?

- 1 Never
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Usually
- 4 Always
- 5 I never pressed the call button

4

COORDINATE PROVIDER COMMUNICATIONS

Poor communications among hospital staff is recognized as a barrier to patient safety, and disorganized communications among providers cause inefficiencies with treatment planning and care coordination.



CASE STUDY

Kosair Children’s Hospital, part of the Norton Healthcare System in Louisville, Ky., brought their nurse call and interactive patient care system together. Messages are now routed to nurses’ Wi-Fi phones and smartphones. [LEARN MORE»](#)

CASE STUDY

IU Health Goshen Hospital in Goshen, Ind., streamlined their average door-to-balloon response time for heart attack patients, organizing upwards of 30 staff members from multiple departments. They are able to coordinate the entire process for a code STEMI response in an average of 68 minutes—24 percent faster than the national guideline. [LEARN MORE»](#)



CASE STUDY

The Ottawa Hospital in Ontario, Canada, uses technology to improve communication among staff with secure messaging, including code call notifications. [LEARN MORE»](#)

U.S. hospitals waste more than **\$12 billion** annually from communication inefficiencies among care providers.¹

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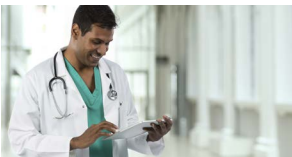
PROMOTE A QUIETER, MORE RESTFUL HEALING ENVIRONMENT

Research has shown how important sleep is to mental and physical health, and that a peaceful environment is important to the healing process. Noise not only disrupts patient healing, but it is also a common source of dissatisfaction.



IN THE NEWS

Maple Grove Hospital in Maple Grove, Minn., uses software to connect all nurse call system patient requests, alarms, and alerts from patient monitoring equipment to the right individual’s mobile device, whether that means involving a nurses’ aid, a nurse, or a group of responders.



CASE STUDY

PinnacleHealth System in Harrisburg, Pa., also uses software to route messages to staff, reducing overhead paging and noisy hallway conversations. [LEARN MORE»](#)

“When a text is sent there’s no noise of someone talking on the phone in the hallway. It’s an efficient method that is more discreet.”

Chris Hunsinger, Telecommunications Technician, PinnacleHealth System

During this hospital stay, how often was the area around your room quiet at night?

1 Never

2 Sometimes

3 Usually

4 Always

6

SPEED THE DISCHARGE PROCESS

Once a patient has been told he or she is being released, waiting an hour or more to leave can put a negative pall over the entire hospital experience. Coordinating the discharge process can be sped up and simplified with automated messaging to alert nursing, transport and housekeeping—and other necessary departments, such as infection control and the pharmacy.

“When we have a bed change, there’s a whole team involved, and it’s a coordinated effort. Sending messages to Wi-Fi phones and/or pagers has made the process much smoother. It’s very fast—just the push of a button.”

—Chris Hunsinger, Telecommunications Technician, PinnacleHealth System

“During the three months immediately following implementation [of the test results management solution], we saw an 11% improvement in patient discharge times.”

— José Bennett, PACS Administrator, Palmetto Health

¹AIG. Patient Safety; Hospital Risk - Perspectives of Hospital C-Suite and Risk Managers. April 2013. http://www.aig.com/Chartis/internet/US/en/Patient%20Safety%20Hospital%20Risk%20White%20Paper_tcm3171-482027.pdf

TIPS WHEN RESEARCHING COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS FOR INCREASED PATIENT SATISFACTION

1. Determine whether messages can be sent to the variety of mobile communication devices used by different roles; this should include smartphones, Wi-Fi phones, pagers and more.
 2. Ask about integration capabilities with existing hospital systems (LIS, PACS, the EMR, etc.).
 3. Make sure the system includes receipt acknowledgement and audit trail support.
 4. Ensure it has the ability to escalate unacknowledged notifications.
 5. Ask whether you can send alerts/alarms from clinical alerting/monitoring systems right to caregivers' mobile devices for fast resolution.
 6. Explore the capabilities for protecting patient data (encryption, remote message removal, etc.).
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