

# Patient experience



# Engaging with your patients counts!

**At Healthy Blue, we strive to make our members' experiences positive.**

Each year, between January and May, a random sample of your adult and child patients may get a survey called Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®). Both surveys ask your patients to rate and evaluate their experiences with:

- Their personal doctor or primary care physician.
- The health plan.
- Their health care.
- The specialist they see most often.

CAHPS is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

# Engaging with your patients counts (cont.)

## The CAHPS survey questions include:

- In the last six months, how often did your/your child's personal doctor:
  - Explain things in a way that was easy to understand?
  - Listen carefully to you?
  - Show respect for what you had to say?
  - Spend enough time with you?
  - Seem informed and up to date about the care you got from these doctors or other health providers?

# Engaging with your patients counts (cont.)

## Additional questions include:

- In the last six months, how often did:
  - Your child's doctors or other health providers make it easy for you to discuss your questions or concerns?
  - You get an appointment for a checkup or routine care at a doctor's office or clinic as soon as you needed?
  - You find it easy to get the care, tests or treatment you needed?

# Provider satisfaction

## Why resolve issues?

- Up to 60 percent of dissatisfied patients do not return.
- Most dissatisfied patients tell eight–ten people. Approximately 13 percent of those dissatisfied patients tell 20 people.
- It costs five times more to attract a new patients than keep an established ones.
- Seven out of ten complaining patients become return customers if the issue is resolved.
- About 95 percent of patients return if the issue is resolved on the spot.

# Basics of patient experience

- The people interacting directly with the patient determine the patient's perception of the provided service.
- Was the service poor, excellent or something in between?
- When you serve patients directly, you have the **power** to affect their perceptions.
- Create a memory of *the people with the friendly voices, the folks who have all the answers or the person who cared about my problem.*

# Effects of positive patient experiences

- **Greater job satisfaction:** It allows you to feel needed, useful and productive. When you provide high-quality patient experience, you feel you're making a difference and can derive pride in your work.
- **Reduced stress:** Learning from the patient experience will save you stress and hassle. Enhanced skills help keep patients from becoming angry and reduce the length of intensity of the anger.
- **Enhanced job success:** Upper management takes notice when you are the *go-to person* or when patients comment on how you were able to assist them.

# Positive member experience

Please help us make the members' experience across the health care continuum a positive one!





# What do your patients want?

## Tips to improvement:

- Listened to and not feel rushed
- Language easy to understand
- Treated with respect
- Compassion and empathy
- Get needed care such as tests/treatments
- To be involved in treatment plan
- Get an appointment when needed

# How do you meet patients needs?

- Demonstrate active listening by asking questions and making confirmatory statements.
- Ensure that representatives are courteous and empathetic.
- Ensure that patients do not feel rushed when discussing their health and avoid interruptions during the visit.
- Spend enough time with the patient to address all of their concerns.

# How do you meet patients' needs?

- Provide clear explanation of treatment and procedures.
- Respect cultural differences and beliefs.
- Obtain and review records from hospitals and other providers.

# Establishing trust

*“Do what you do so well  
that they will want to see it again  
and bring their friends.”*  
— Walt Disney



# Resolving issues — tools and techniques

- **Don't downplay the seriousness of a patient's complaint.** Let the patient tell you his or her side of the story without interruption.
- **Acknowledge and apologize after you have heard the complaint.** Whether you are right or wrong, the patient is seeking an apology. Offer it so the patient can move forward.
- **Express empathy.** Let patients know that you understand the problem and are concerned about their feelings.
- **Establish a rapport with the patient.** Patients need to hear that you are on their side and are willing to do whatever it takes to solve their problem.
- **Do not go on the defensive.** You are certain to lose the patient if you become confrontational.

# Resolving issues — tools and techniques (cont.)

- **Take control of the situation:** Once you have heard the patient's side of the story, take the appropriate action to resolve the problem.
- **Ask the patient what he or she wants and practice active listening:** You may be surprised to find out that the patient's solution to the problem is both fair and simple.
- **Once the plan of action has been established, sell it:** Explain to the patient how the plan will solve the problem.
- **Follow through and follow-up:** Ensure that the plan has been carried out and the results are acceptable to the participant.
- **Document the situation:** It is always a good idea to write down the patient's concerns and what the outcome was. These notes will be helpful if a similar problem arises.

# How do you handle challenging situations?

- Separate personality from behavior.
- Don't take it personally.
- Try to see his or her perspective.
- Be patient.
- Develop a clear understanding of the patient's situation.
- Take a deep breath and refocus.
- Set your expectations.
- Communication is key.

# Questions to ask yourself

- How can I best deal with patients who are upset?
- What can I say to upset patients to help them resolve their issues?
- What are the must-know customer service skills that I should work on building everyday?
- How can I project a positive attitude so I can practice changing negative experiences into positive ones?
- How can I better understand the patient's frustration and why they are lashing out?



# Creating a culture of excellence

- Team work and customer service go hand in hand.
- Be respectful of all members of your team.
- Be coachable and open minded to help offered by your supervisor or other members of your team.
- Be willing to work together to accomplish high patient satisfaction.
- Be willing to be available and do your share of necessary extras (take one for the team).
- Be willing to share your knowledge with others. Mentor and support new team members.
- Give recognition and credit for a job well done or a difficult situation well handled.



*“It’s never crowded along the extra mile.”*  
— Wayne W. Dyer

# References

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ):  
<https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/2-why-improve/index.html>\*
- What Matters Most: Improving the Patient Experience  
Online CME:  
<https://www.mydiversepatients.com/le/ptexp/index.htm>\*

\* This link leads to a third-party site. That organization is solely responsible for the contents and privacy policies on its site.

# Thank you

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