

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

7 WAYS TO START IMPROVING PATIENT SATISFACTION TODAY



allen™

EMPOWERING PATIENT ENGAGEMENT



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WHY IS IMPROVING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE SO HARD?

Let's face it. A stay in the hospital is not one of most people's favorite things to do. Patients don't feel well, they often are scared, and they are in a strange place being attended to by people they don't know. Unlike at home, they have little control over their environment. It can be noisy, with intrusions around the clock. All the while, the patient is barraged with complex healthcare information delivered by a busy, and sometimes understaffed, care team tasked with explaining it in compassionate and understandable language.

It is no wonder that improving the patient's experience is a challenge. Yet, the transition to value-based care, with reimbursements tied to performance, makes improving patient experience a critical success factor. With the introduction of the Affordable Care Act, increasing HCAHPS scores has a direct correlation with Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements – and private payers have followed suit.

In this guide, we'll highlight seven best practices to help your hospital create better patient experiences, improve HCAHPS and positively impact reimbursements.



ONE

MAXIMIZE YOUR EQUIPMENT INVESTMENT.

With hospital IT teams and budgets strained to meet major technology mandates like electronic health records, there's sometimes little appetite or remaining funds for other investments in the name of better patient experience. The fact is, though, that delivering a better patient experience does not hinge on costly new equipment purchases or long implementation projects, but rather on maximizing your people, processes and existing tools in innovative ways.

These systems can be implemented quickly, with minimal impact to the IT team and virtually no new equipment purchases.

For example, you already have invested in televisions in patient rooms. Why not maximize that expense by transforming those hospital TVs into state-of-the-art communication and patient education portals? Hospital-grade televisions (and even bedside touchscreens and tablets) can become the source through which nurses deliver patient education, patients control their room comfort and make special requests, and ancillary departments can respond to patient requests and feedback in real time.

Many hospitals take the interactive approach a step further, by also maximizing televisions in non-patient locations such as conference rooms, waiting rooms and other unique locations. Interactive patient engagement system technology turns existing television hardware into a patient-friendly portal to a better experience – accessible to the patient 24/7 from their hospital bed.



TWO

RETURN CONTROL TO THE PATIENT.

In a setting where the customer has little control over many decisions involving them, even seemingly small improvements can make patients feel empowered. And empowered patients make for happier patients. For example, giving patients control over the comfort settings in their room helps them rest more comfortably and benefits the healing process. A patient-centric smart room environment lets the patient control their room temperature and lighting settings and even adjust window blinds – without staff assistance or the need to get out of their bed and risk falls.

Helping patients mitigate ambient noise levels is another way to empower the patient to have a more restful stay, and recover faster. It is well-documented that hospital noise is more than just an annoyance, it impacts the healing process. Clinical studies recommend a multi-pronged approach to ambient noise reduction including instituting quiet hours, using white noise systems and enabling patients to select soothing sound tracks from their interactive television to encourage relaxation and mask noise.





THREE

THINK LIKE A HOTEL.

Going to the hospital is no vacation – but hospitals wanting to improve their patient satisfaction can take a page from hotels’ consumer-centric model. Providing conveniences that make their stay feel more hotel-like improves their comfort, makes patients feel more in control and creates happier patients. Dietary services are an ideal place to start. Increasingly hospitals are abandoning the traditional paper menus and costly overhead to take meal orders and implementing online room service instead. Online menus accessible on the TV or touchscreen let patients order what they want to eat when they want it. Menu selections also can be restricted for patients with certain conditions such as diabetes. Guest trays can be ordered and paid for online as well.



In looking for ways to wow patients, don’t forget their families and guests are key audiences as well. Focus groups and patient feedback surveys are great ways to uncover visitor pain points, and identify opportunities for a better experience for them too – and potentially a new revenue stream. For example, consider using an interactive system to let visitors request and pay for their valet parking, with an alert when their car is ready. Or, enable them to use the in-room TV to purchase a book or flowers from the gift shop for delivery to the patient room.



FOUR

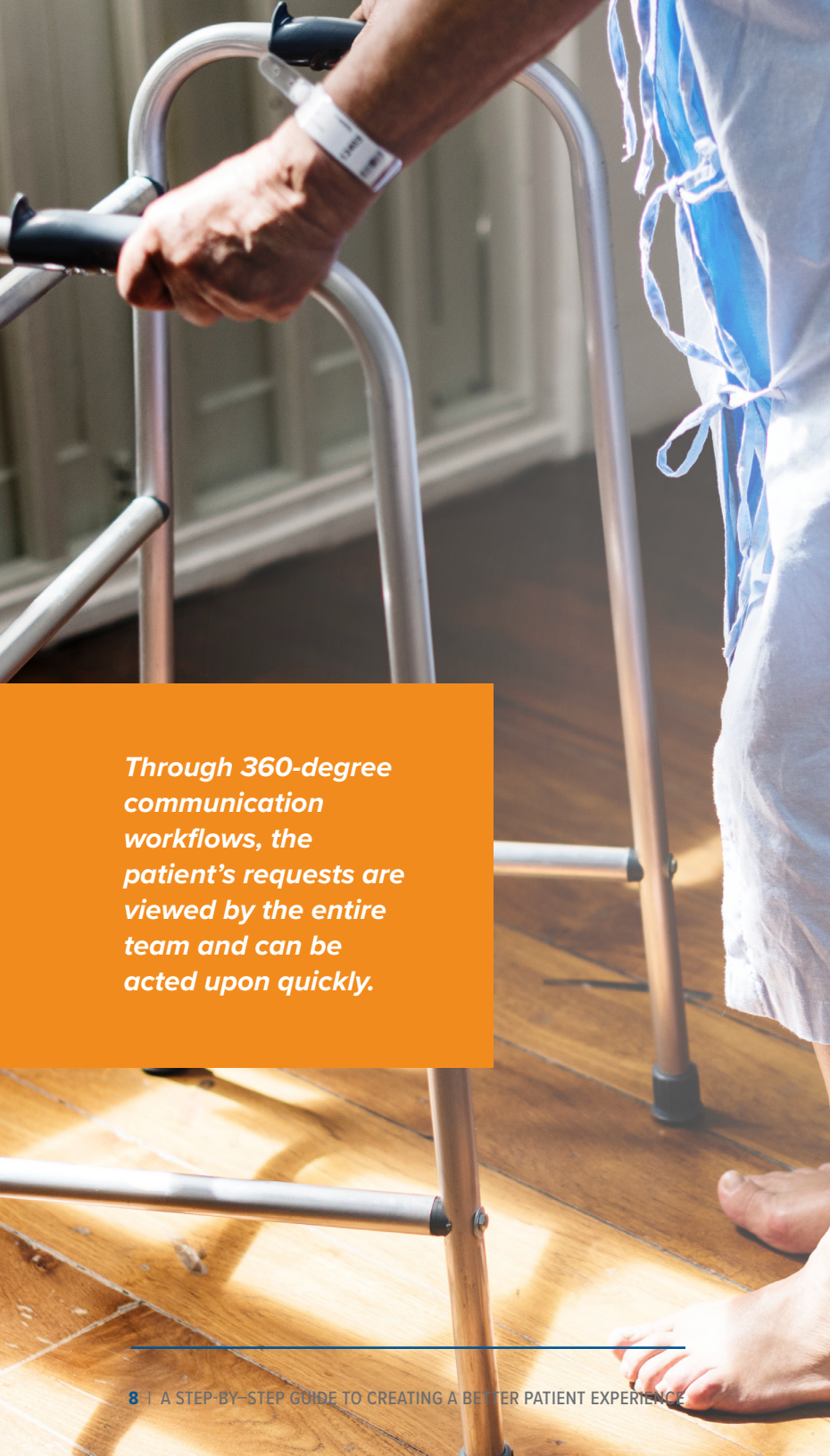
MAKE INFORMATION EASY.

Patient engagement technology applies best practices from the entertainment industry to engage and inform patients more effectively and efficiently.

The nurse’s role in bedside education can be more effective by incorporating entertaining, informative videos into the process. The nurse can select videos specific to the patient’s diagnosis and have them appear on the patient’s television as “assigned” viewing. Through the EMR, the nursing team can monitor the patient’s progress in viewing them, and follow up to answer questions in daily rounds.

Likewise, medication information offered through an online interface lets the patient, and family members or caregivers, understand how and when to administer prescriptions, in colorful screens written in laymen’s language. And speaking of language, consider online translation services via your interactive device as a more cost-efficient and readily accessible alternative to in-person translators when needed.

The amount and complexity of information a patient receives while in the hospital can be overwhelming. Yet, patients who are well-educated about their recovery and care protocol before being discharged are better equipped to stay healthy and avoid costly readmissions.



FIVE

ACT, AND REACT, IN REAL TIME.

Online patient surveys accessible on the TV are a great way to engage the patient in their care, and get real-time insight into patient concerns. Rather than calling a nurse with a complaint or concern, the patient can use online survey options to submit the concern to specific departments. Through 360-degree communication workflows, the patient's requests are viewed by the entire team and can be acted upon quickly. During bedside rounding, nurses can confirm that the patient's needs were addressed further solidifying positive service recovery.

When a complaint or concern is submitted, have processes in place to respond quickly and compassionately. By tracking trends in patient feedback and requests, you can identify units that need service improvement training, high-performing employees to be recognized, and even potential opportunities for new services.

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SIX

ENGAGE THE STAFF.

The best technology solutions are only as good as the people and processes supporting them. So, while the technology streamlines and automates a variety of tasks, clinical staff can play an integral part in maximizing it. For example, through their daily contact with patients, nurses bring unique insights for new features that can improve the patient experience. A patient engagement/experience committee that meets weekly or monthly, led by a designated champion, is an ideal way to give employees ownership of your program and vet ideas for enhancing it. Offer training in new employee orientations and in-service workshops so that all employees are well-versed in using the solution and can encourage patients to use it as a standard part of daily rounds.





SEVEN

HIGHLIGHT CUSTOMER SERVICE.

Improving patient satisfaction is not a one and done effort. Improving the patient experience requires continuous process improvement, a commitment from all levels of the organization and a shared vision of customer service as a core mission. Share trends in weekly unit meetings and daily huddles and involve the team in problem solving to correct deficiencies. Set measurable goals for HCAHPS scores, and communicate progress toward those goals in visible ways, such as on posters and bulletin boards. Celebrate improvements and wins. When patients praise an employee's stellar service, highlight those employees in team meetings and in publications. Consider implementing a customer service quarterly award, and add a "star performer" designation to their badges and in their employee files.

IMPROVING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE REQUIRES AN INTEGRATED APPROACH IN WHICH PEOPLE, PROCESSES AND TOOLS WORK IN TANDEM TOWARD A CORE MISSION:

PATIENT SATISFACTION

Staff must be trained, empowered and incentivized to deliver great service. But they need manageable processes and creative tools to truly be effective in bending the patient satisfaction curve. By leveraging employees' talents and keen insights into patient needs, alongside technological innovation and streamlined workflows, hospitals are positioned to improve HCAHPS and increase reimbursements.





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