



Improving the Quality of Health Care... Community by Community

Each year Americans spend more than a trillion dollars on health care. As much as a third of those dollars is wasted, either by delivering unnecessary or inadequate care to patients or, even worse, harming them. No one, rich or poor, is immune to the shortcomings of American medicine. Spiraling health care expenditures provide no assurance of access or quality.

Lost amidst the debate over rising costs and access is the patient experience. More and more providers, purchasers and others involved in quality improvement are rallying around the concept of patient- and family-centered care.

Patient- and family-centered care promotes partnerships among patients, families and providers at all levels of care. With this approach, patients and families are viewed as key members of the health care team. They have access to useful information to promote health and manage disease. They participate in decisions about their care. They are allies for quality and safety.

There are opportunities for patients and families to share their insights and perspectives in planning, implementing and evaluating health care policies and programs. There are also opportunities for them to participate in teaching the next generation of providers. Patient- and family-centered care is about working together to ensure that health care is of high quality, safe, effective and evidence-based. Attaining this standard of care will require the sustained commitment of clinicians, quality experts, administrative leaders, government and regulatory groups, patients and families.

Patient- and family-centered care is one of the overarching themes of *Remaking American Medicine...Health Care for the 21st Century*. Many of the stories in the PBS series highlight the efforts of providers and patients who are committed to transforming health care into a patient-centered system, community by community. The series and the accompanying outreach campaign will promote best-practice models, raise public awareness about opportunities for improving the quality of health care and encourage Americans to become their own health care advocates.

The goals of the outreach campaign are to stimulate a national dialogue about the importance of improving American health care, raise awareness about opportunities for improving the quality of health care, facilitate the development of local coalitions that will amplify the messages of the campaign, and encourage Americans to become active participants in their own care and in transforming the health care system.

It's your health...you call the shots

To date, more than 35 local coalitions have formed to help accomplish these goals. The campaign *Leadership Guide* provides step-by-step suggestions on how these coalitions can use the series as a catalyst for change while leveraging the promotional support provided by the national outreach team and more than 40 National Partners. The *Guide* recommends how coalitions may partner with patients and families to conduct a quality improvement needs assessment, develop action plans responsive to specific issues and needs, undertake a variety of outreach activities to inform and motivate people, and conduct campaign evaluations. The campaign Web site, RAMcampaign.org, also provides a wide variety of resources and tools to assist coalitions.

The following strategies and tactics are meant to engage the community in a constructive dialogue that will result in actionable efforts and provide the impetus for sustainable coalitions that will continue to support quality improvement.

Coalitions are being asked to:

- Motivate individuals to learn more about quality health care and to become involved in improving systems of care.
- Support an attitudinal change – inspire individuals to become effective advocates for their own health care and for that of their families.
- Educate, sensitize and motivate the public to expect providers to deliver health care that is safe, effective and patient-centered.
- Conduct formal assessments to ascertain the community's most pressing health care quality issues that affect patients and their families.
- Mobilize the community to take action that improves the quality of health care for its citizens by working with patients, families, providers, purchasers and policy-makers.
- Consider developing "Envisioning the Ideal" sessions that would build a shared understanding of quality care. Plan "Envisioning the Ideal System of Health Care for Elders and their Families;" for "Individuals with Chronic Illness;" for "Children;" for "Pregnant Women and their Families;" or for "Promoting Health and Wellness in Primary Care." Each of these areas could be a long-term focus for change.

- Challenge hospitals and community providers to adopt the Institute of Medicine's 10 Simple Rules for the 21st Century Health Care System.
- Recommend the adoption of HCAHPS® so that providers have a uniform understanding about patient and family perceptions regarding quality.
- Promote the availability of Hospital Compare™ and Quality Check™ to help patients and their families assess information about the quality of their local health care providers in their respective communities.
- Showcase the successful work of individuals and institutions, known as *Champions of Change*, that are committed to patient- and family-centered care.
- Encourage patient and family caregiver involvement in hospital system design teams.
- Share examples of effective coalition efforts being led by public television stations such as WHYY-Philadelphia or the result of a collaboration between a public television station and a Quality Improvement Organization, such as KETC-St. Louis and Primaris, Missouri's Quality Improvement Organization.
- Undertake discussion groups, town hall meetings, health care forums, community screenings and statewide roundtables.
- Utilize public libraries, schools, shopping malls, hospitals, community health centers, senior centers, and others to enhance patient and family access to useful health information and support.
- Encourage the next generation of providers to have strong communication and collaboration skills.
- Implement campaign measurements that track public awareness of the issue, both pre and post broadcast, and evaluate the extent to which providers move to adopt the patient-centered standards.
- Utilize the campaign Web site -- RAMcampaign.org -- to learn more about the importance of patient- and family-centered care.

Below please find resources related to patient- and family-centered care.

Strategies for Leadership: Patient-and Family-Centered Care (A Resource Guide)

Institute for Family-Centered Care

http://www.aha.org/aha/key_issues/patient_safety/contents/resourceguide.pdf

This resource guide for hospital leaders and medical staff provides information about the concepts of patient- and family-centered care as well as guidance on how to advance such care within organizations. Case studies and a listing of additional resources and references also are featured.

Patient-Centered Care Information

Institute for Health Care Improvement (IHI)

<http://www.ihl.org/IHI/Topics/PatientCenteredCare/>

IHI's Web site has tools, resources and health care improvement stories that focus on involving patients in the design of care, meeting patient's needs and making informed decisions about health care.

Quality of Health Care: "Q-Pack"

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ)

<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/pathqpack.htm>

AHRQ provides practical tips for preventing medical errors in hospitals, clinics and other health care settings. This patient fact sheet provides questions to ask about medicines, surgery, medical diagnoses, equipment, and lab reports.

HCAHPS®

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ)

<http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/hspcahps.htm>

This resource provides information about AHRQ's process to develop a national standard for assessing hospital patient experiences.

Putting Patients First®

National Health Council

http://www.nationalhealthcouncil.org/initiatives/putting_patients.htm

This public education program is designed to empower consumers and patients. It includes a document listing patients' rights and responsibilities, practical messages to help consumers take action and public service announcements.

Hospital Compare

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) along with the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA).

<http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov/>

This Web site produced by CMS and HQA, provides information on local hospitals as well as such patient tools as a hospital checklist and a description of patient's rights.

Speak UpSM Initiative

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

<http://www.jcaho.org/general+public/gp+speak+up/index.htm#lod>

These tools and resources meant to assist patients in taking an active role in their health care, making better health care choices and becoming more informed participants in their health care.

For additional information about *Remaking American Medicine*, local coalitions, and other patient- and family-centered care resources please log on to www.RAMcampaign.org.