



920 Main Street, Ste. 801 | Kansas City, MO 64105
P: 816-880-9990 | F: 816-880-9088

Question & Answers- Engaging Patients in Quality Improvement Activities

Although patient engagement is not a new concept, engaging patients and family members in the facility's quality improvement activities can require a significant shift in the facility's culture. All the Network Quality Improvement Activities (QIA's) this year include a patient engagement component and encourage you to identify a Network Patient Representative (NPR) and engage a patient or family member in your quality assurance and performance improvement meetings/activities. This article will provide some answers to some common questions the Network has received.

1) We're not sure who would be a good fit? What are the criteria for a patient to be involved?

When considering a patient or family member to participate, think of the patient who has been open with their experience and can appreciate the experience of others. The person who attends may or may not be your Network Patient Representative. The purpose for their attendance at the QAPI meeting is to provide that "patient voice" to the team, a patient "subject matter expert", just as you have the professionals on the team that share their area of expertise. They can provide a different perspective to the topic you are addressing. For example, regarding blood stream infections, the patient can share what they do themselves in terms of hand hygiene as well as what they see other patients and staff do. Staff can then ask "what information has been helpful for you to stay on track?" This can lead to a more in depth understanding of the problem allowing for the team to develop more creative strategies and may lead to more patient buy in.

2) How do we incorporate the patient when we are limited with time already for our meetings?

We encourage you to start by planning the first 15-20 minutes of the meeting to address the topic you are working on with the patient. Preparation for both the staff and the patient is important so that you can make the most of your time together. Staff should prepare some questions ahead of time and ideally share them with the patient prior to the meeting. This way the patient has time to consider their answers and keeps the meeting focused.

3) Our Medical Director does not want to bring a patient into the meetings, what can we do?

Determine what the underlying issue really is. Most likely it is not because the MD does not want patient input to improve care. Time is most likely the issue that is the primary concern, spending extra time on the discussion. Shortening the amount of time for patient input is one way to address this, the other is to have the other members of the team meet with the patient prior to the meeting (using specific questions) and bring the patient's feedback to the meeting. Perhaps by seeing the benefit of having the different perspective brought to the table, the MD will see the benefit in taking 15 minutes in a future meeting for the benefit. Other MD's have found it so beneficial that they decided to have a patient at all the facilities they are Medical Director for.

4) **How do we ensure confidentiality?**

Include a review of confidentiality in your meeting agenda, just a simple reminder for all the team that individual patient issues are not to be discussed. Establish ground rules for the meetings and have all the team members sign off on it. Discuss with the patient what information from the meeting you'd like them to share with other patients... "We talked about improving the Transplant Waitlist process and the team really wants to know how they can help patients move through the process." This shows all patients the facility's commitment to improvement.

For more information review the "**Engaging Patients in Quality Assurance Performance Improvement and Governance teams**" webinar at:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/4415079435296292353> and/or download the attached resources "Guidelines for Engaging Patients in Quality Assurance & Performance Improvement" and Patient QAPI Invitation. More questions? Contact your QIA lead or DeeDee Velasquez-Peralta, Patient Services Manager to at 816-880-9990 to discuss your facility's situation and needs.