

Assessing Patient Experience with Care

Why Measure Patient Experience with Care?

Measuring patient experience with care allows practices to gather information from patients on the things that matter most to patients. Practices can use this information to identify and address areas for improvement.

Studies show that positive patient experiences are associated with:

- Better health outcomes
- Increased patient self-management over their health and health care
- Reduction in patient no-show rates
- Patient loyalty
- Employee satisfaction
- Financial incentives

As new care delivery and payment reform models are introduced under the Affordable Care Act, measuring patient experience is increasingly important. To achieve Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) recognition, practices must obtain feedback on patients' experiences of care. Practices can receive special acknowledgment for reporting their results from a standardized patient experience survey. Patient experience measures are also used to assess quality performance for Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) under the Medicare Shared Savings Program. Some of these measures include patients' rating of their health care provider, access to specialists, shared decision making, and getting timely

care and information. By measuring patient experience now, practices can be better prepared for upcoming changes in payment and care delivery models.

In addition, patient input is important when introducing new processes and health IT tools, such as patient portals and secure electronic messaging. Assessing patient experience lets practices know how patients are using these tools, what patients value most, and what can be improved to better meet patients' needs.

What Methods Are Used to Measure Patient Experience?

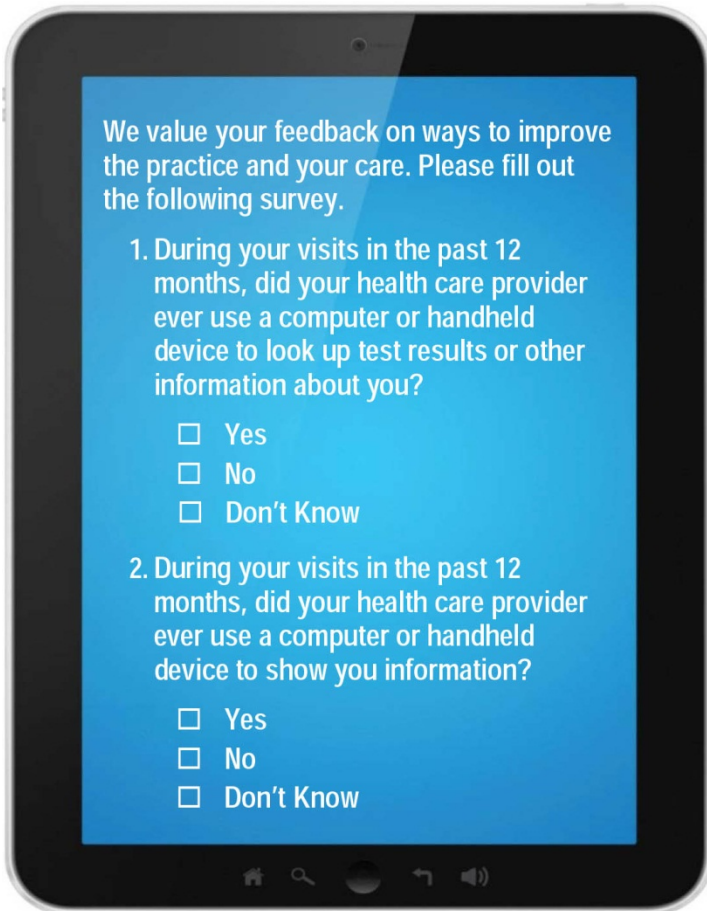
Surveys are one of the most common ways to measure patient experience. Other methods include conducting patient focus groups and interviews.

Different types of patient surveys can be inexpensive and efficient methods of gathering patient input:

- Paper-and-pencil surveys can be given to patients at the clinic or mailed to patients.
- Online surveys can be available via the patient portal for patients to fill out at their own convenience.

Practices can develop their own surveys or use existing standardized questionnaires such as the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) surveys. These surveys were developed especially for measuring consumer's experience with different aspects of health care. The CAHPS health IT survey module, for example, includes questions about email communication with health care providers, viewing lab and test results and other health information online, and the health care provider's use of a computer or handheld device during the consultation.

Example of Patient Experience Survey



“The use of patient experience information can be an important strategy to use in driving system transformation”

– Katherine Brown, Center for Health Care Quality,
George Washington University

Measuring Patient Experience with Health IT

For many patients, the experience of health care providers using computers in the exam room and other aspects of health IT is new. To assess patient experience in these areas, practices can conduct surveys (or collect input using other methods) that ask patients about:

- Using the Internet or the patient portal to schedule appointments
- Viewing or downloading their health information online, including visit notes and lab and test results
- Using secure messaging to communicate with providers, including the quality of messages and responsiveness of providers
- Using the patient portal to request medication refills or using e-prescribing
- Their provider’s use of EHRs during the visit
- Other health IT tools patients want and need to improve their care.

Selected Resources

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. *About the CAHPS® Health Information Technology Item Set*. (2011). Retrieved from https://cahps.ahrq.gov/surveys-guidance/docs/1313_about_hit.pdf

Browne K, Roseman D, Shaller D, Edgman-Levitan S. (2010), Analysis & commentary. Measuring patient experience as a strategy for improving primary care. *Health Affairs*, 29(5), 921-925.

California Healthcare Foundation’s Patient Portal Resource Center. (2014). Example of Shasta Community Health Center’s survey assessing the use of their newly implemented patient portal. Retrieved from <http://www.chcf.org/~media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/P/PDF%20PatientPortalsPatientSatisfactionSurvey.pdf>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2014). *Aligning forces for quality: Improving health & health care in communities across America. Measuring Patients’ Experience of Care*. Retrieved from <http://equity.forces4quality.org/measuring-patients-experience-care>.