

Patient Satisfaction: Summary of Spring 2014 CCMi Provider Annual Meeting

Keynote Speaker, Meryl Luallin: "Excelling at the Art of Chiropractic"

The presentation "*Excelling at the Art of Chiropractic*" by Meryl Luallin had attending providers wishing they had brought their staff members. Here are a few of the **C.L.E.A.R.** tips presented for increasing patient satisfaction.

- **C**onnection to patients brings referrals, better treatment plan compliance, and ultimately better outcomes. Tips for better connection include:
 - Most important driver of patient satisfaction — the patient feels well-liked
 - A Good first impression often begins with the phone call
 - Greeting: "Good morning, we have been expecting you"
 - Doctors can shake hands, if appropriate (note: some cultures are not comfortable shaking hands)
 - Briefly describe doctor training
 - Sit down with the patient when you enter the room which implies you are not rushing
 - Knock on the door before entering the room and step in with a smile
- **L**istening to the patient
 - "How can I help you today?"
 - Second most important driver of patient satisfaction — empathetic responses
 - ✓ "I am sorry to hear that..."
 - ✓ "That must be tough/frustrating for you..."
 - ✓ "I can understand why you're concerned..."
- **E**xplain to the patient
 - Provide personalized, written information
 - Explain why and what you are doing during the exam
 - Notify the patient if you are running late
 - Apologize if you are late
 - Avoid being late by
 - ✓ Hallway Huddles to prepare for patients
 - ✓ Manage interruptions
 - ✓ To politely interrupt a talkative patient, touch their shoulder and ask, "May I ask some questions?"
- **A**sk
 - "What do you think of the plan? Does it make sense?"
 - "What other questions do you have for me?"
- **R**econnect for closure
 - Recap the visit
 - Offer a parting comment: "Take care..."

ChiroCare's Quarterly Patient Satisfaction Surveys

Preparing the network for the changes in health care today is always one of the priorities at ChiroCare. A key focus going forward will be placing a special emphasis on the importance of patient satisfaction. The Patient Protection Affordable Care Act (PPACA) has incorporated patient satisfaction of one the three main goals of health care. These goals, often referred to as the "Triple Aim," are quality outcomes, high patient satisfaction, and an affordable price.

ChiroCare sends quarterly patient satisfaction surveys to patients, reporting the results to the provider network annually. In 2013 we selected the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey, a standardized and widely used instrument, which allows comparison to allopathic practitioner scores at national and local levels. ChiroCare network satisfaction scores beat national scores in most areas.

To continuously improve quality, the ChiroCare Quality Improvement Steering Committee reviewed the annual survey results and identified three areas where providers scored below the 50th percentile national ranking and recommended provider support and education to improve these scores. The areas identified for quality improvement are:

- Knowing patient medical history
- Assuring patient safety by washing hands and tables
- Spending enough time with the patient

To address the three patient satisfaction quality improvement areas at our patient satisfaction seminar, we conducted a group activity where three groups of doctors each tackled one area for improvement. This led to great strategies - see which ones would work best for your clinic.

1. Medical History done well at first visit

- Acknowledge with patient you have reviewed their history on the first visit. "Let me take a quick look at medical history" — and do this with the patient.
- Electronic Health Records — helps demonstrate medical history review
- Writing one thing down from a previous visit, then asking patient about it
- Acknowledge previous pain scales or ADL abilities from last visit

2. Patient Safety — Washing hands/wearing gloves/cleaning rooms

- Gloves on the wall, creating a visual indicating you are conscious of the important of protection to the patient and to yourself
- Hand sanitizers in the treatment rooms
- Enter the room with paper towels in hand
- Keep wet wipes handy for table and counter cleaning
- Wipe headrest routinely
- Keep headrest paper on top of the hold down bar (which doesn't typically get cleaned)
- Clean bathrooms, rooms and windows

3. Enough Time with Doctor

- **Common Obstacles:**
 - Doctors think they can see more patients than they actually can
 - Patients want prime time
 - Doctors try to squeeze in latecomers
 - Patients come prior to appointment time
 - Doctor shows up late
- **Suggestions:**
 - Reserve slots for new and emergency patients. Avoid overscheduling traps by blocking off non-busy times for emergency patients or to catch up when running late.
 - Ask new patients to fill out forms before the appointment (download from website) or come in early to fill out forms.
 - Have staff keep patients informed of delays so they don't walk out.
 - Exit with a brief summary of the visit and any instructions you have for the patient.
 - Ask if they have any questions before exiting the room.

[Sample Patient Satisfaction Survey](#)