

S U S A N   K E A N E   B A K E R

## EXCEPTIONAL PATIENT CARE



### Patient Satisfaction Initiative – Here's Your 4-Week Plan

**Y**ou've got 2,000 things to do this week and patient satisfaction keeps falling into the "important but not yet critical" bucket. Finding the time to plan your strategy for improving patient satisfaction seems impossible.

Here's a four-week plan to get you started. Each week, you will have three tasks to accomplish: a team meeting, 2) action assignments that move you closer to patient satisfaction, and 3) gracious communication strategies for your entire team to incorporate.

At your Week 1 team meeting, distribute copies of your patient satisfaction survey to your colleagues and ask them to complete the surveys as they think your patients would.

Use your own survey, or use the Government's evidence-based CAHPS surveys.

For example, if you are practice based and don't have a patient satisfaction survey, you can use the Clinician-Group survey published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at <https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov>.

Look for the "Download CAHPS Kits" on the left hand toolbar.

Say, "Please complete the survey the way you think Mr. Average Patient would rate us." If you are using practitioner-specific surveys (good for you if you are!) ask "Please complete the survey the way you think Ms. Average Patient would rate you a few days after a visit."



The gap between your team's ratings and the highest possible ratings can be your improvement target. This team approach to identifying opportunities for improvement gives everyone the chance to feel a part of the initiative's success.

A key to successfully using the four-week plan is to provide reminders to complete the action items. Ask your team what kind of reminders work best for them. Recognize those who demonstrate the behaviors and work on the plan.

Post a list of the changes you make, along with any positive feedback received from patients, family members and/or staff.

You'll find your four-week plan on Page 2 of this newsletter. As you review the plan, you may have questions. Please email your questions to me at [susan@susanbaker.com](mailto:susan@susanbaker.com) and I will answer them within two days.

Good luck! I look forward to hearing about your successes with this plan!

Kind regards,

*Susan*

# Four Week Patient Satisfaction Initiative

WEEK	PLAN
Week One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Team meeting:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete patient survey as you think your patients would. If you don't have a satisfaction survey, use the appropriate CAHPS survey. You can select it at <a href="https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov">https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov</a>. Where the highest score is not given, what actions would be needed to accomplish it?</li></ul></li><li><b>2. Action assignments:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrange for a chair or stool in each exam room to be used by your clinical staff. Patient perception of time spent increases when clinicians take a seat.</li><li>• Set up Google Alerts and Twilerts for your physician name(s) and the name of your organization so you are aware of any public feedback.</li></ul></li><li><b>3. Gracious communications:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "I'm so happy to see you!"</li><li>• "Thanks for coming to see us today!"</li><li>• "Thanks for being our patient."</li></ul></li></ol>
Week Two	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Team meeting:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distribute a self-assessment tool to each person, then discuss which behaviors make the biggest difference. The self- assessment can be printed from <a href="http://www.susanbaker.com/page.asp?PageID=8491">www.susanbaker.com/page.asp?PageID=8491</a>.</li></ul></li><li><b>2. Action assignments:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All staff record questions asked by patients and estimate how many times a week they hear the question.</li><li>• Clinicians begin providing handwritten or personalized checklists for patient post- visit activities.</li></ul></li><li><b>3. Gracious communications:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Associates begin introducing themselves with first and last names.</li></ul></li></ol>
Week Three	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Team meeting:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In Week 2, you recorded the questions asked by patients. This week, being crafting the best responses. Tackle ten questions this week and continue developing responses to additional questions on a weekly basis to create a comprehensive Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) database.</li></ul></li><li><b>2. Action assignments:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each clinician asks five patients "What could we be doing to make visiting us a nicer experience for you?" Compile and prioritize improvements.</li><li>• Assign specific pages of your website to associates to review for currency and accuracy. Assign pages outside of the associate's discipline where possible. Example: ask a clinician to review the page(s) on billing questions.</li></ul></li><li><b>3. Gracious communications:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gracious acceptance of a compliment is an opportunity for improvement for many humble health care professionals. Discuss this and role play.</li></ul></li></ol>
Week Four	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Team meeting:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brainstorm ways to help patients feel like your organization is their organization.</li></ul></li><li><b>2. Action assignments:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Institute tracking &amp; reporting systems for all tests, specialist consultations, etc.</li><li>• Decide how you will communicate FAQ information to patients. One option- post on your website.</li></ul></li><li><b>3. Gracious communications:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create systematic process for identifying and respecting patient preferences.</li></ul></li></ol>