Passport HEALTH PLAN
University Health Care, Inc.
with The Partnership Council
Administered by AmeriHealth Mercy

Improving Patient Satisfaction

Training Tool for Practitioners and Office Staff

Compiled by Passport Health Plan

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This training module is designed to help you improve patient satisfaction.

Practitioner Office Staff: Advancing Patient-Centered Care

Refine Your Customer Service Skills

- Be courteous, respectful, caring, and responsive.
- Take time to explain things and answer patients' questions.
- Provide accurate general information, such as directions.
- Schedule appointments within a reasonable amount of time.
- Offer assistance to resolve issues.
- Acknowledge mistakes and attempt to resolve all patient problems.
- Take responsibility for covering the desk at all times.
- Go the extra mile to achieve patient satisfaction.

Source: Sullivan K., Luallin M., Star-Studded Service:
Six Steps to Winning Patient Satisfaction (Englewood, CO: Medical Group Management Association, 2007)

Practitioner Office Staff:
Advancing Patient-Centered Care, cont.

Practice Good Telephone Etiquette

- Answer within three rings.
- Speak clearly, concisely, and with confidence.
- Display a positive attitude and remain calm, polite, and professional.
- Identify your department/office and introduce yourself to the caller.
- Give caller an opportunity to state concerns and/or needs.
- Offer assistance to resolve the caller’s issues.
- Promptly return telephone calls.

Source: Sullivan K., Luallin M., Star-Studded Service:
Six Steps to Winning Patient Satisfaction (Englewood, CO: Medical Group Management Association, 2007)

Practitioner Office Staff:
Advancing Patient-Centered Care, cont.

Demonstrate a Professional Demeanor

- Begin work on time and return from breaks and lunches on time.
- Inform co-workers and make sure the desk is covered when leaving the desk.
- Promote an attitude of cooperation and teamwork.
- Maintain patient and employee confidentiality at all times.
- Demonstrate concern and respect for patients and co-workers.
- Be flexible with schedule changes.
- Stay updated on policy and procedure changes.
- Abstain from eating/drinking (except coffee or water in a covered container) or gum chewing at the desk or other patient/visitor visible areas.

Source: Sullivan K., Luallin M., Star-Studded Service:
Six Steps to Winning Patient Satisfaction (Englewood, CO: Medical Group Management Association, 2007)

Practitioner Office Staff: Office Access Reminders

Providers are required by the Kentucky Department for Medicaid Services (DMS) to adhere to the following appointment scheduling standards:

- **Appointments with PCPs and Specialists must:**
  - be scheduled within 30 days for routine care and preventive care visits.
  - be scheduled within seven days for care that is non-urgent, but in need of attention.
  - not exceed an office waiting time of 45 minutes.
  - be scheduled at a rate of six or less per hour.

- **Urgent Appointments must:**
  - be scheduled within 48 hours (urgent).

- **Prenatal Preventative Appointments must:**
  - be provided within 14 days of request for pregnant women in their **first trimester.**
  - be provided within seven days of request for pregnant women in their **second trimester.**
  - be provided within three days of request for pregnant women in their **third trimester.**

Source: Plan policies and materials.

Practitioner Office Staff: Tips to Reduce Your No-Shows

- Thank patients for keeping their appointments and arriving on time.
- Engage patients to explain the reason and timing of their next appointment.
- Hold a team conference before every clinic and prioritize a review of the schedule each day. Cancel appointments with patients who have been admitted to the hospital.
- Ask patients how they want to be reminded of their appointment and provide options for cell phone and home telephone.
- Perform automated telephone appointment reminder calls using appropriate technology such as the Televox or PhoneTree systems.
- Document disconnected telephone numbers in the practice management system.
- Make reminder calls at least two days prior to the appointment.
- Do not bump patients – they will bump you.

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Office Staff:
Tips to Reduce Your No-Shows, cont.

- Ease patients' ability to notify you of a cancellation by offering 24/7 cancellation line with voicemail.
- Develop a protocol for how cancelled appointments will be rescheduled.
- Rebook the cancellation slots with emergent patient appointments for rescheduling.
- Establish a wait list of patients who want appointments rescheduled at earlier times.
- Provide information via your telephone on-hold messages about transportation, location, and travel advisories.
- Document history of no-shows and identify "frequent no-shows" in your practice management system alert messaging.
- Do not offer "prime" appointments to patients with a history of no-shows.

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Office Staff:
Tips to Reduce Your No-Shows, cont.

- Contact patients who miss appointments and rebook them regularly.
- Engage the patient in a relationship with the practice by making statements such as: “Dr. Jones was very disappointed that you didn’t show up for your appointment…”, “I’ll let Dr. Jones know that you wish to reschedule. When shall I tell him that you would like to reschedule?”
- Send correspondence about no-shows directly from the physician.
- Target strategic overbooking and/or manual reminders (telephone calls or e-mails) to patients who are pre-disposed not to show for their appointment. Patients pre-disposed not to show are those with a history of >2 no-shows, patients scheduled for diagnostic procedures, patients who were previously bumped, and patients who were scheduled more than 60 days in advance.
- Confirm that you have cancelled previously scheduled appointments in the practice management system when a patient calls for an acute appointment request.

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Practitioners:
Tips to Increase Patient Satisfaction

Establish a sense of trust

- Be a perceptive listener and carefully observe small details to understand patients' values, goals, challenges.

Uncover patients' actual needs

- Ask questions with a spirit of curiosity and establish yourself as a trusted partner.

Think dialogue, not monologue

- Instead of dominating a conversation, ask questions and make a connection before offering advice.

Don't force "the close"

- To tell if a patient is ready to follow your advice, try a "test close." To confirm a commitment or invite negotiation, ask the patient if a certain approach is acceptable.

Always follow up

- Ask patients to follow-up by telephone or e-mail to let you know how the treatment plan is working, or have your staff make a follow-up call.

Source: © 2005 American Academy of Family Physicians, by Manoj Pawar, MD, MMM. All Rights Reserved.

Practitioners: Partner in Shared Decision-Making

When participating in the shared decision-making process, remember to:

- Provide information on the nature, course and treatment of the condition;
- Present information in clear and understandable language;
- Discuss possible treatment options;
- Listen to and consider the member's preferences and suggestions, as well as outcomes of his/her previous experiences;
- Encourage the member to take medication as prescribed;
- Provide information on available/preferred pharmacology surrounding the diagnosis;
- Provide contact information for resources and support groups as applicable; and,
- Schedule any follow-up appointments before the member leaves the office.

Source: Plan policies and materials.

Practitioners:
Improve Health Outcomes by Understanding Low Health Literacy

These simple techniques may increase your patients' comfort level with asking questions, as well as compliance with your instructions after they leave appointments:

- **Create a safe environment** where patients feel comfortable talking openly with you.
- **Use plain language** instead of technical language or medical jargon.
- Sit down (instead of standing) to **achieve eye level** with your patient.
- **Use visual models** to illustrate a procedure or condition.
- **Ask patients to "teach back"** the care instructions you give them.

Source: "Do You Know?" provider education brochure by the Partnership for Clear Health Communication.

Practitioners:
Implement Culturally Competent Care

What Title VI means for providers

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance (including Medicare and Medicaid) from being excluded on the grounds of race, color or national origin. This has been interpreted to include persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) and those with sensory impairments such as hearing or vision difficulties.

How to comply with Title VI

Compliance with Title VI is **mandatory** for individuals and groups that receive federal funds either directly or indirectly. To adhere to Title VI, the Plan and its providers must make reasonable efforts to effectively communicate with members with LEP and sensory impairments. In addition, as a recipient of federal funds, all Medicaid and Medicare providers must abide by the following Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS):

- Standard 4: Language assistance must be provided at no cost to patients/consumers
- Standard 5: Signage and written notices of interpreter services must be available at no cost
- Standard 6: Your office must use qualified/certified interpreters/translators
- Standard 7: All vital documents must be translated

Practitioners:
Implement Cultural Competent Care, cont.

Receive Assistance from our Cultural & Linguistic Services Program

Call (502) 585-7932 or e-mail cals@amerihealthmercy.org if you are interested in any of the following free services:

- On-site training for physicians and office staff
- Answers and advice for Title VI/CLAS Standards and compliance issues
- Provider toolkit
- Multi-lingual posters
- Language line information
- Office signage

Or, for more information, visit our recently-updated web page by going to www.passporthealthplan.com/providercenter and selecting the link under “Services” from the list on the left.

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this material, please call your Provider Relations representative or the Provider Relations department at (502) 585-7943.

Thank you for taking the time to utilize our presentation.

We hope you find this information helpful to our shared mission.