

Patient Engagement in Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI)

CMS continues to emphasize the importance of patient engagement in every aspect of patient care, including QAPI. Encourage your facility patient representative (FPR) or another engaged patient to attend QAPI and share experiences with the team. This is a great opportunity for a patient to provide you with feedback about your facility, facility staff, facility culture, projects, and other initiatives. The Network's goal for engaging patients in QAPI is to have at least **25%** of facilities implement this activity by September. To support this initiative, many dialysis providers have formulated policies allowing patients to participate in QAPI meetings. Below are steps to begin incorporating the patients' voices in QAPI.

Identify Appropriate Patients

- Select individuals who express interest in their care or the care of a family member
- Consider those who offer constructive ideas and can help staff and physicians better understand the patient perspective
- Other characteristics include:
 - An optimistic outlook
 - Good listening skills
 - Eagerness to learn and engage in care and/or advocate for other patients in the facility
 - Work well with others
 - Speak comfortably with patients and providers
 - Respectful

Invite a Patient

- Once you have identified a patient or family member to participate, explain the purpose of QAPI
- Review the patient's role and what is expected as a result of participation in QAPI
- Provide the patient with a topic to discuss with the team (i.e. review a question from the ICH CAHPS survey where the facility can improve, have a patient who has gone through the transplant

referral process talk about their experience and offer pointers that would be helpful to other patients being referred, or have a home patient share ideas for how to encourage more patients to do a home modality)

- Give the patient a choice to participate in person or by phone



Plan the Meeting

- Provide everyone with an agenda of the meeting
- Open the meeting with an introduction to all team members, and identify each person's role
- Provide the patient with 10-15 minutes at the beginning of the meeting to discuss the identified topic with the team
- Engage the patient with appropriate, open-ended questions, such as:
 - What do you think we are doing well in the facility?
 - What area do you think we could improve in the facility?
 - What do you identify as the primary reason patients miss or shorten treatment?
 - What is the best way for the team to communicate with patients about their treatment?

Integrate the patient's feedback into practice. Remember to start small. Instead of inviting a patient every month, try quarterly participation. If something does not work well, try a different technique or topic. You may find that the implementation of this activity helps to increase patient engagement, understanding of facility processes, and ultimately improve overall patient satisfaction.



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