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Partners for excellence: Committed to meaningful partnerships with patients and families in pediatrics

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Abstract

Although the landscape in pediatrics continues to shift and change, one of the keys to our continued success remains the same... it's about partnership. It's clear the element of partnership is well woven through our organizations as illustrated by many of us having patient and family advisory councils, family consultants, and family partners. While this foundation is strong and essential, we must do more to truly listen, recognize the value of patient and family involvement, act upon the information shared, openly discuss issues, and strive for better together. True partnership with patients and families requires us to shift the paradigm even further by incorporating and ensuring that patients and their families are included in all aspects of our organizations - from the design of care plans, to system changes and improvement efforts, to participation on hospital committees and being recognized as the partners and thought leaders. We should recognize that patients and their families have the greatest skin in the game and will help us accelerate the advancements.

Keywords

Partnership, family-centered, compassionate, families, partnering, together, meaningful change, councils, partners, patients, experience, safe, quality, thought leaders, children, pediatrics, children's hospitals, patient experience

In pediatrics, the landscape continues to shift and change, but the core of what we do - healing children and supporting their families during times of great vulnerability - challenges us to be our best. One of the keys to our continued success remains the same... it's about partnership. Partnership with patients, families, and one another. Pulling together as one team, united around a common goal - safe, compassionate, high-quality care experiences.

Partnering with patients and their families can seem simple... how could we not deliver the best care without involving not only the child, but also his or her family? Who after all knows the child best? Who will ensure the care plans developed are followed beyond the walls of the hospital or clinic? Who will help us think about the challenges and fiercely fight side by side with us to achieve the best possible outcomes? However, as many of us know, partnership, even in pediatrics is not easy. We have systems in place to support our families, but partnering with families has been more of an evolution.

Taking a step back, the field of patient experience has evolved over the years and includes family centered care, person-centered care, compassionate care, co-design and now most broadly as patient and family experience. It is the sum total of all we are striving to do, at each and every touch point of our organizations. It's about safe, clinically excellent care, combined with efficient and compassionate communication. It's finding ways to engage everyone in

this work, from the patient, their families to the front line environmental services person to the Chiefs as we know this work takes every single person. True partnership with patients and families though goes beyond all of this. It requires us to shift the paradigm even further by incorporating and ensuring that patients and their families are included in all aspects of our organizations - from the design of care plans, to system changes and improvement efforts, to participation on hospital committees and being recognized as the partners and thought leaders. We should recognize that patients and their families have the greatest skin in the game and will help us accelerate the advancements.

As we continue to look at the landscape in pediatrics, it's clear the element of partnership is well woven through our organizations. Many of us have patient and family advisory councils, family consultants, family partners, and designated seats for patients and families in many of our system committees and key functions. While this foundation is strong and essential, it requires more than just having these positions - it requires us to truly listen, recognize the value of their involvement, act upon the information shared, openly discuss issues, and strive for better together.

Partnering with patients and families can enhance our understanding of our data and drive meaningful change. We have more data available to us but need to find ways to integrate it into meaningful and actionable reports that

leaders and front-line clinicians and staff can use to drive improvements. We need to think broader about how we capture the data to include a variety of voices to provide a comprehensive story of our performance. Voices from our advisory councils can be combined with not only our survey results but also the rich and meaningful information received in Family Relations and real-time data obtained through active rounding with patients and families. It's taking each stream of work and weaving them together that allows us to see powerful trends and opportunities for improvement.

There's incredible work underway in pediatrics and now is the time to push further, faster. In many ways it is about going back to the fundamentals of what drew us to this work in the first place. We are part of high-performing systems, invested in being the best, where patients and families face the toughest and most unexpected challenges in their lives. We have a unique opportunity to not only transform the experience of care in pediatrics, but to help be a model of excellence for our counterparts across the full continuum of care. All of us will experience the "other end of care" whether as patients, siblings, spouses, sons and daughters of patients. We all have skin in the game in one form or another and have the opportunity to drive transformational improvements and needed change. As you read through the first ever pediatric focused experience journal, we would like to applaud and thank you for your steadfast leadership and continued commitment to partnering with patients, families and one another to elevate and advance this critical work.