Enhancing the Patient Experience in the Physician Practice

Toya Gorley, Director of Client Services, CHAMPS Patient Experience / Santalucia Group
Susan Kruger, Director of Physician Services, Lake Health
Toya Gorley, MBA

20 years of experience

Director, Client Services at CHAMPS Patient Experience/ Santalucia Group

Director, Service Excellence at Cleveland Clinic

Passionate about improving the patient experience for patients and families
Vision

• Create strong patient-centered cultures by leveraging both people and process.

Mission

• To ignite passion and purpose throughout healthcare to inspire and sustain a culture of empathy, service and respect.
Partnering to Create an Optimal Patient Experience

CHAMPS Patient Experience / Santalucia Group

Lake Health Physician Practices

Language of Caring
The Patient Experience

Recent focus on the inpatient experience

Employee connections shape the patient’s perception of their experience

Every touch point is significant
Communicating with Empathy

Creates and strengthens human connections.
The Results

When employees embrace empathetic communication:

- They have a greater sense of purpose.
- They are more confident in interactions.
- They can have a greater impact on everyone around them.
Creating The Culture of Caring

Strategy:
Teach empathetic communication skills to physician practice employees

• Vision
• Journey
• Sustainability
• Next Steps
Susan Kruger, FACMPE

30 years of experience

Director, Physician Services at Lake Health

Passionate about helping independent practices succeed

Passionate about improving the patient experience
Lake Health

Community hospital system in Northeast Ohio

Approximately 2800 employees

Over 500 physicians on staff

More than 60 independent practices, 148 providers, 400 employees

28 employed practices, 90 providers, 300 employees

Offer multiple programs to support our independent and employed practices
Lake Health Mission and Vision

**Mission**

- To provide comprehensive health care services to the residents of Lake County and neighboring communities in partnership with those who share a commitment to local access, healing with **compassion** and superior quality.

**Vision**

- LHS, in partnership with its medical staff, will be the first choice for superior care close to home. Together, we will coordinate a lifetime of health which patients and families **experience as warm, responsive** and state-of-the-art. Our organization and culture will produce the best opportunities to practice and work.
Lake Health Values

**RESPECT:**
- We believe in treating everyone in a dignified and caring manner.

**INNOVATION:**
- We believe that the pursuit of creative ideas leads to improvements that build a better future.

**TEAMWORK:**
- We believe that working together and communicating effectively help us achieve shared goals.

**STEWARDSHIP:**
- We believe that the wise use of our resources today assures our ability to continue our mission tomorrow.

**INTEGRITY:**
- We believe that our words and actions need to be in harmony to build trusting relationships.
My Role – Support Independent Practices

Services

- Answer line
- Newsletter
- Networking
- Email blasts

Programs

- Education
- Group purchasing
Why We Started the Journey

- Recognized inconsistencies in service delivery among practices
- To remain competitive in our market
- It’s the right thing to do.
My Plan

Get everyone on the same page

Offer communication training that

• Is relevant to the physician practice
• Focuses on strengthening interactions with patients, family members and coworkers

Promote ownership at the practice level by providing tools for managers to “keep it alive”

Identify metrics to demonstrate success and impact

The Ultimate Goal: To create and sustain a consistent service experience among all practices.
Our Journey

Found a program

Obtained leadership support

Addressed immediate challenges

Implemented the program

Demonstrating ROI
# Found a Program

## Content
- Consistent with organization’s values
- Compliments the inpatient program
- Focus on communication and strengthening connections
- Skill-based training
- Easy to administer
- Proven to be successful

## Partnership
- Offer advice, expertise and creative ideas
- Provide guidance to adapt program to our environment
- Share best practices for implementation and sustainability
Language of Caring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heart-Head-Heart provides a framework for empathetic communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seven “heart” skills enable all employees to make their caring felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-hour training to review all skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up sessions to reinforce and practice each skill individually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Obtained Leadership Support

Approached the PHO for support and funding

Received Support

Had to be creative about how to fund
Advice: Leadership Support

Find

• A physician champion immediately who will endorse the program and the approach

Utilize

• Administrative staff from the inpatient side. They can be an advocate because of their experience with HCAHPS
Addressed Challenges

Engaging physician practice network and independent practices

• Offered customer service training before
• Created interest by promoting program in newsletter and by email
• Leveraged office managers

Competing priorities for physicians and practice managers

• Heightened awareness by educating on CG-CAHPS and impact on reimbursement

Cost in time and money

• Offered on-site training at multiple times of the day
• Split total cost of program with the employed group
• Calculated per employee cost and charged back to the practice

Limited resources to manage the program

• Found turnkey program and partner to assist with implementation
Implemented the Program

Conducted
- 2-hour Jump Start training for office managers
- May 2013

Proposed
- 3 options for staff training:
  - Managers conduct the training for their practice
  - Staff attend group sessions offered for all practices
  - I conduct training at the practices
# Program Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Component</th>
<th>Independent Practice</th>
<th>Lake Health Physician Group</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-hour Jump Start training for managers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-hour Jump Start training for employees</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-specific follow-up training 2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-specific follow-up training 2014</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advice: Implementation

- Do not get discouraged about fluctuations in participation.
- Sites adopt at different rates.
- Some sites may not complete the program.
- Sites will come on board when you least expect.
## Demonstrating ROI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participating Practices</th>
<th>• Goal: 50% increase in 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Self-Assessment</td>
<td>• Self-reported improvement due to training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Evaluation</td>
<td>• Understanding of skills and satisfaction with training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager/Physician Observations</td>
<td>• Assessment of behaviors in action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Feedback</td>
<td>• Pleased with the experience and acknowledged the behaviors being used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Other                             | • Heightened awareness of everyone’s impact  
|                                   | • Consistency in service delivery among practices |
Our (Quantitative) Data

Issues/Concerns

- Data received from self-assessments didn’t tell us anything
- Surveys given to patients at the end of the visit
  - Hit or miss
  - Low return rates
- Insignificant month-to-month fluctuation in “courtesy of front desk staff” metric
Our (Qualitative) Data

Qualitative data proved to be most valuable
Employee Feedback

“I learned to explain how my work directly benefits the patient. They appreciate knowing why we are asking them to have a test performed or take a medication.”

“It reminds me to stop and think about how the patient feels, not just that I should do my job but do it with more feeling and empathy.”

“I like how it helped me to realize some things about myself without me feeling like I was being picked on. I learned a lot of other people struggle with the same communication skills.”
Manager/Physician Feedback

"I overheard one of the girls in billing lamenting about a tradesman who came to her house to install a front door and she ended up throwing him out. After hearing the story, her co-worker responded, “Clearly he didn't attend the communication seminar we went to or he wouldn't have behaved that way. While most of it was common sense, he sure could have used some of the tips the instructor gave us.”

“I see your handiwork popping up at workstations - a good sign - you speak and they listen!”
Patient Feedback

“I love this office – best doctor, best receptionist, best nurse (Mike) – triage line easy to get through.”

“Not only does everyone in the office do an excellent job, they actually care about you and your well-being. I have always had the best care from Dr. Baniewcz and his staff. They go above and beyond to ensure I get excellent care.”

“The front desk receptionist was extremely pleasant and went above her duties on my expectations. She was very patient and kind. She informed me what to do. I was extremely satisfied.”
Advice: Demonstrating ROI

- **Identify and Obtain**
  - approval on metrics right away

- **Ensure**
  - methodology for collecting data is sound

- **Identify**
  - resource to manage the data collection and reporting process

- **Share**
  - results on a regular basis

- **Do Not**
  - discount the value and importance of qualitative data
Sustaining The Culture of Caring

Strategy:
Integrate skills with HR policies and provide tools to reinforce the skills within the practice

- Job description
- Standards of behavior
- New employee observations
- Performance improvement
- Evaluation
- Reminders
- Reward/recognition
Job Description

Essential Functions

- Acknowledge patient/visitors
- Make eye contact
- Professionalism

Competencies

- Service Orientation
  - Respond promptly to patient’s needs
  - Professionalism
  - Positive team spirit
Standards of Behavior

**Commitment to Coworkers**
- I will treat coworkers *respectfully* and professionally by *listening*, avoiding defensiveness and refraining from public criticism.

**Communication**
- I will *listen* to my patient’s concerns in ways that *show I care*.

**Personal Attitude, Courtesy and Etiquette**
- I will remain calm when dealing with an upset caller. I will *listen* to what they are saying, *demonstrate that I care*, and want to help.

**Commitment to Patient Service**
- I will without placing blame, *acknowledge and apologize* for any delays and provide an explanation when appropriate.
New Employee Observations

- Behaviors that demonstrate great service
- "Always“ behaviors
- Positive attitude
- Verbal and non-verbal communication
- Listening skills
Performance Improvement

Unsatisfactory service to patients

Inappropriate conduct with a fellow employee
Performance Evaluations

- Attitude
- Relationships with patients
- Team support and co-workers
Visual Reminders

EMPATHIZE

Be Present

LISTEN

Acknowledge Feelings

EXPLAIN INTENT

Apologize

BE POSITIVE

Thank People

COMMUNICATE WITH CARING

Lake Health

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We get it.
Reward and Recognition

Intrinsic

Extrinsic
The Journey Continues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Develop</th>
<th>recognition program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>managers to maintain enthusiasm and use of the skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take</td>
<td>physician engagement to the next level (Leaders &amp; Role-Models)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage</td>
<td>more practices to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>to offer patient surveying at a cost that practices can afford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider</td>
<td>future of program (Where does it go from here?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advice: The Entire Journey

Don’t be afraid of the challenge.

Know that there are others who are willing to join you and support you.

It’s the right thing to do.
Questions? Contact Us.

Toya Gorley
- Director, CHAMPS Patient Experience
- 216.255.3637
- toya.gorley@chanet.org
- Follow me on Twitter @ToyaGorley
- pxperspective.com and champspatientexperience.com

Susan Kruger
- Director of Physician Services, Lake Health
- 440.354.1996
- susan.kruger@lakehealth.org
- www.lakehealth.org