Establishing a Culture of Patient Engagement at UTMB Health

Whether through the delivery of patient care, the education of tomorrow’s health care workforce or the world-class research that brings the latest health care advancements to the hospital bedside, the patient is the ultimate focus of everything we do at UTMB Health.

Patient engagement is essential to ensuring our patients receive the safest, best possible health care experience. The more comfortable we make our patients and families, the more they will trust us, feel less anxious, better understand what is going on with their treatment plan, and better understand discharge instructions. They’ll also share their positive experiences with others.

While there are many practices in place that aid in improving the patient experience, such as training staff with scripting upon entering and exiting the patient room, what do we really mean when we talk about engaging the patient?

Patient-centered organizations emphasize that the patient should be honored as a whole person, not just their illness. By engaging patients and families in their care, a relationship of trust is built. This relationship begins and flourishes with communication - a dialogue that is not only rich in information, but also understandable to the patient and family. It also means that patients and families are involved throughout the health care process so that they feel informed, decisions about care are made as a team, they are assured safety is a top priority, and they can see that the system is working well.

Establishing patient engagement as part of our culture at UTMB is essential, and creating an environment that allows for patient engagement to take place means that we must embrace a Culture of Trust in which staff can speak up, ask questions and make suggestions. It also means we must examine our systems and processes from the patient’s point of view as well as involve them in the design of those systems and processes. All of this is to make UTMB Health a place where patients choose to come because they and their families are fully involved in their care.

There are already many initiatives in place at UTMB to improve patient engagement. For example, Lean Value Stream Analysis projects map our processes in order to gain a better understanding of how patients flow through our system and to identify opportunities for improvement. As we develop the future scenario of those improved processes, patient focus groups will be included to provide feedback. The article, Lean: Value Analysis in Family Medicine Island West Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), featured on page 7, describes this most recent Value Stream project.

Another exciting patient engagement project currently in progress at UTMB began with Drs. Lindsay Sonstein, Saleh Elsaid, Olugbenga Ojo and Michael Underbrink in the Physician Leadership Academy. Commit to Sit underscores patient satisfaction as a priority for excellent clinical care and was initiated to help improve physician engagement with...continued on page 2
patients. The project began with the review of HCAHPS survey responses within the category that addresses “physician communication”. After identifying common survey responses, the group devised a simple and effective method to improve engagement with patients and families – by placing chairs in med/surg rooms, providers will be able to sit comfortably and converse with patients and families at eye-level, thereby demonstrating good listening skills and creating an atmosphere of friendliness, comfort and patience. This method also helps to address another element of engagement measured by the HCAHPS survey, the length of time physicians spend speaking with the patient and family.

There are many other wonderful projects going on at UTMB, and we hope you will share these projects with us so we may share them with each other. Please email us at friday.focus@utmb.edu.

“Mere words cannot fully express how grateful my mother and I are that Rachel Erickson, RN, was assigned to caring for her during her hospital stay. My family and I had an insurmountable amount of confidence in Rachel’s care for our mother, which in turn gave us the comfort and assurance that she was being cared for by one of UTMB’s best. There’s nothing more comforting for a family than to know they can leave your hospital and go home assured that their loved one is in the best hands possible.”

UTMB Patient’s Family Member

How do you improve the Patient Experience?

FEATURING RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Sharon Johnson, Senior Radiation Therapist

“I truly believe that it is all about the patient, and where they are at that moment in time in their lives as they embark on a very scary and intimidating journey.

The range of emotions can vary day to day, minute by minute. I just try to be who they need me to be at that moment, and I love it! Sometimes it’s a shoulder to cry on, sometimes they need a sister or a mother figure, sometimes it’s just a friend to hold their hand.

I give a little piece of myself to the patients and I gain so much in return. We see each other for many days and they know that I am on the front line in their battle that they’re fighting. It is such a great moment on their last day of treatment and to see them when they come in for follow-up appointments. Of course we have some not so happy endings, but it is nice to know that we can make a difference in a patient’s life through their course of treatment.”

Cecilia Swartz, Patient Service Specialist (left)

“I’ve been in Radiation Oncology for about a year, so I’m still learning from Nina. [Radiation Oncology] is a completely different experience than the Newborn Nursery. There, the people you see are joyful and happy; here, people are scared.

I see patients come in with fear at their first visit, and slowly with each visit, you see it change. They get to know us, they get to know their doctors and become excited and happy to be here because we’re helping them through this difficult process.

They always know we’re here to talk to, to listen and to reassure. I see patients who come in after not being here for years, and still remember the people who sat at the front desk and they ask about them. We become a part of their story.”

Nina Tyler, Patient Service Specialist (right)

“We’re on the front line when it comes to the patients. First, we talk to them on the phone, and then we see them in person. The relationship begins before they ever come in for their first appointment.

We try to comfort the patients, be sympathetic, and let them know that we are here for them. I answer a lot of questions and tell them everything they need to know before coming in for the first time, because I know this isn’t an easy place to come.

They often tell me they recognize my voice from the phone calls, and they find comfort and familiarity in that. We do our best to comfort and calm by talking and listening- whatever they need. We’re here to serve.”

See Shout Outs! on page 8 for a recent patient comment on the staff in Radiation Oncology.
New! Submit Clinical Value Analysis Requests Online

Starting in April 2013, requests for evaluation of new supplies and services by the Clinical Value Analysis (CVA) team should be submitted via an online form. In partnership with Premier, Inc., the University of Texas System’s group purchasing organization, UTMB is pleased to present the ValueAdvisor® tool.

Through this portal, you will not only be able to submit requests, but you can also monitor the status of your requests. In addition, the Clinical Value Analysis (CVA) team will be able to track and document decisions in one location, and executive leadership will be able to follow the progress of the CVA in terms of how it is enhancing quality patient care, improving processes and managing costs.

Please visit the Clinical Value Analysis webpage at http://intranet.utmb.edu/healthsystem/cva (a link is also located on the Health System Intranet page under “Employee Resources”) to access the tool and learn more about Clinical Value Analysis at UTMB Health. For questions, please contact: Johann Ramirez joaramir@utmb.edu 409-772-4248.

Celebrating Success and Working to Improve!

Patient Satisfaction and Experience

Core Measures – Q3 2012 CMS Core Measure Composite – 95.2% observed (UHC median 95.0%).

Hospital Acquired Conditions (HAC) – rates are favorable.

PSIs – launching iatrogenic pneumonia CS&E team.

Hand Hygiene – observation results continue to exceed goal; physician performance remains slightly below others; we all need to continue working to improve until we reach and maintain 100% compliance!

Our Inpatient HCAHPS Satisfaction scores have fallen below the 74.4% target for the past 3 months; our 12-month average has crossed the target threshold, now sitting at 73.7%.

Outpatient Press Ganey Satisfaction scores have fallen to 76.9%, just short of target (77.6%) for the 12-month mean. Our performance is positive relative to our Academic Medical Center peers, however, not as competitive against AHA region 7 or “All Responding” health systems.

Our Emergency Department Press Ganey Satisfaction target fell below the 12-month mean in at 66.7% (our target is 69.5%, set at median between national threshold and benchmark).

The National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI) allows us to compare UTMB Health to 162 other academic medical centers. One expectation of Magnet Recognition is to outperform the benchmark most of the time (greater than 50% of the time). UTMB Health units that reported outperformed the benchmark in all areas, including percent of patients with physical restraints, percent of surveyed patients with HAC (pressure ulcers) and total falls per 1000 patient days. The only exception where we did not outperform the benchmark was for injury falls per 1000 patient days – a PDSA project is in progress to improve in this area.

People Soft Upgrade

Human Resources recently upgraded the PeopleSoft HCM system to version 9.1. The upgrade ensures UTMB has at its disposal the most current features and necessary PeopleSoft support to enable employees and institutional leaders to leverage self-service and accomplish mission critical tasks. For more information about the upgrade and the features and enhancements added to streamline the institution’s human resources and payroll functions, please visit http://hr.utmb.edu/HCM/.

For additional information or questions about the impact of the upgrade on health system employees, please contact Scott Livanec, Director of HR Technology and Analytics, Bo Stults, Executive Director of HR Services, or Alexa Akim, Communications Specialist, HR.
UTMB Health Celebrates National Nurses Week and Honors Health System Week, May 6-12

A health system is more than a place where people go to heal, it is a part of the community that fosters health and represents hope. From providing treatment and comfort to the sick, to welcoming new life into the world, health systems are central to a healthy and vibrant community. UTMB will honor Healthcare System week the week of May 6 in recognition of all members of the health care team.

In addition, on May 6, 2013, UTMB Health will join the American Nurses Association in celebrating Delivering Quality and Innovation in Patient Care, as part of National Nurses Week, which is held May 6-12, every year. The purpose of the week-long celebration is to raise awareness of the value of nursing and help educate the public about the role nurses play in meeting the health care needs of the American people.

In honor of the dedication, commitment, and tireless effort of the nearly 3.1 million registered nurses nationwide to promote and maintain the health of this nation, the ANA and UTMB are proud to recognize registered nurses everywhere on this particular day for the quality work they provide seven days a week, 365 days a year.

For a full list of events for National Nurses and Health System Week, view the April 12 issue of Nursing News: http://intranet.utmb.edu/nursing/pdf/news_events/4-12%20Newsletter.pdf

Liver Life Walk Houston 2013
April 27, 2013

Terry Hershey Park
15200 Memorial Park
Houston, TX 77079

To join or donate, simply select from the website:
UTMB TX Transplant
http://go.liverfoundation.org/site/TR?fr_id=3430&pg=entry

utmbconnect Change Center
New Improved Hours!
Mon-Fri, 7 am - 10 pm
Sat-Sun, on-call support is available by calling ext. 2-5200, option 4
In January 2013, UTMB Health began a Blood Management Program, based on a nationwide initiative to promote the appropriate use and management of blood and blood components. Blood Management programs are designed to promote safe, optimal, and efficient use of blood products and blood related resources as well as utilizing proactive evidence based strategies to reduce the risk of transfusion.

In UTMB Health’s continued efforts to enhance patient safety, quality and hospital operations, we have partnered with Strategic HealthCare Group, LLC (SHG) to assist us to better improve our blood management and utilization practices within our health system. Hospitals using SHG’s system have achieved reductions in blood utilization up to 30%, through the reduction of unnecessary transfusions while improving the quality of care and patient safety.

SHG has completed a comprehensive assessment and has begun working with UTMB Health to provide education and facilitate evidence based changes to our transfusion practices. The initial Blood Management educational kick-off was conducted in March 2013. During this time, approximately 788 nurses participated in the first of four, 30 minute training sessions titled Introduction to Blood Management and over 300 physicians took part in CME lectures on Evidence Based Transfusion Practice. In addition, several sessions were held with individual disciplines such as Surgery, Anesthesia, Liver Transplant, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Oncology, Cardiothoracic Surgery and Pathology.

Dr. Lisa Farmer and Dr. Vincent Conti are the Medical Directors for the program. Angel Male RN has taken on a new role as the Transfusion Safety Officer (TSO). Over the next several months, there will be focused efforts in a few key areas: awareness and education, revision and creation of evidence-based transfusion guidelines, and improvements with pre-operative anemia management to include early patient identification and pre-treatment; potentially avoiding an unnecessary transfusion, when possible. SHG members will return to campus in May to assist with transfusion guideline discussions and to provide additional education for RN and physicians as well.

Stay tuned to the Daily Announcements and Friday Focus for upcoming Blood Management training sessions, lectures and communication of new transfusion guidelines.

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Bloody Facts- Less is more!

Blood transfusions cause changes in the immune system function of patients who receive them.

Because each transfusion represents a new donor and a new set of immune challenges, each transfusion causes a stepwise increase in the likelihood of serious complications including postoperative infection rates, ventilator-acquired pneumonia, central line sepsis, ICU and hospital length of stay, as well as short-term and long-term mortality rates.

A more conservative approach to blood transfusions not only saves blood but improves patient outcomes and saves lives. Less is more!
Janie Pietramale has volunteered at UTMB since November 2011. Before joining the team at UTMB, she also volunteered at MD Anderson, working with patients with head and neck cancer. "The longest thirty minutes of your life is waiting to hear whether or not you have cancer," she describes. "To have a person present for support is invaluable to patients whose family or friends can’t be present."

Janie has volunteered all throughout her life. A move to Bolivar Peninsula brought her to UTMB. She currently volunteers in the waiting room outside the operating rooms in John Sealy Hospital. She understands what it’s like to be on both sides of the experience – as a family member and as a patient. "Friends and family members are understandably worried; sometimes it’s a tense situation," she explains. “Not everyone is familiar with the experience of being in an OR waiting room. They need someone to keep them informed. Often, they wait for hours, afraid to leave to eat or even go to the restroom in case the doctor comes out of the OR to give an update. I offer to take down the family members’ cell phone numbers so they can be reached.”

Volunteers like Janie are the voice of the family members. “They want that relationship with someone who can help keep them informed, someone to talk to, or even cry to. They need it. I know our patients are receiving the best possible care - I don’t worry about that one bit. But out here in the waiting room, the families need care, too.”

Janie volunteers at UTMB four days a week, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. She stays busy answering the phone, talking to patients and helping keep their minds occupied. She says the staff is incredibly supportive.

"Janie exemplifies complete professionalism. She handles situations with compassion, concern, and respect. Her love for her job is obvious to those she encounters. She has an important job dealing with the emotional status of family members. She handles herself with grace with puts our guests at ease. Please recognize her for her important service to the UTMB family. She is wonderful at what she does!” says Debbie Vassallo, RN CNOR, Assistant Nurse Manager, Surgical Operating Suite.

Janie was recently recognized in the latest edition of the Texas Medical Center news, honored by UTMB & TMC for her tremendous dedication to our patients and their families. Janie and selected volunteers from other TMC institutions will be recognized at a luncheon in Houston on May 10th.

Janie has also recruited her husband, Ray Pietramale, as a volunteer, and he recently started helping last year’s honoree, Jim Stricklin, with the coffee cart.

Don’t Forget: April 21-27 is National Volunteer Week and National Patient Advocate Week!

Spotlight On...

Janie Pietramale,
UTMB Volunteer

UTMB volunteers are some of the most visible individuals on campus and an important part of our care team. They provide our patients and guests with a smile, lend an ear, and help keep patients and their families informed – all of which can help make their time at UTMB a more pleasant experience.

Winnie Richards, a member of the Sodexo Environmental Services (ES) team working at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB Health) in Galveston, Texas, has been named the 2012 recipient of the Hygiene Specialist® Excellence award sponsored by umf Corporation. The award, in collaboration with IEHA and in its third year, was established to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of ES - the first line of defense – in providing a safe patient environment and reducing preventable healthcare-associated infections (pHAIs). ES managers nominate the housekeeper of their choice to receive the award.

“Winnie Richards works in the UTMB Health Burn Unit and her diligence in helping to prevent infections is exemplary,” said UTMB Health ES director Jason Botkin in nominating Richards. “On several occasions, she has been publicly recognized for her role in helping to achieve zero HAI or nosocomial infection rates. Having Winnie receive the Hygiene Specialist Excellence award honors a dedicated individual who every day makes the extra effort in the name of patient safety. We’re very proud to have her as part of our team.”

The Hygiene Specialist Excellence award includes an all-expense-paid vacation for two to South Beach, FL, including airfare and beachfront accommodations. A committee of industry leaders selected the recipient after a review of nominees.

Commenting about the award, umf Corporation CEO George Clarke said, “We have long believed that one of the most effective ways to truly effect change in reducing pHAIs is to recognize the indispensable role that ES plays in mitigating their risk.”

Clarke said including ES as part of an enterprise-wide multimodal intervention team and plan is the only way to reduce pHAIs.

“It is the Hygiene Specialist in particular who plays a critical and far-reaching role – from making sure hospital surfaces are diligently cleaned and disinfected, to playing an important role in helping to reduce the number of days a patient remains in a hospital, to thoroughly processing a room prior to using new technologies that ultimately reduces readmissions, and to contributing to improved HCAHP’s scores,” he said. “Winnie Richards and all the other dedicated ES individuals just like her need to be recognized as the ‘first line of defense’ and for their invaluable contribution to ensuring a safe patient environment.”
NCQA’s Patient-Centered Medical Home is an innovative program for improving primary care in which patients have a direct relationship with a provider who coordinates a cooperative team of health care professionals (including the physician as well as the nurses and medical assistants). The team takes collective responsibility for the care provided to the patient and arranges for appropriate care with other qualified providers as needed. The program offers practices information about organizing care around patients, working in teams and coordinating and tracking care over time, which facilitate partnerships between individual patients and their personal physicians and when appropriate, the patient’s family.

The Island West Group spent the morning session of the Value Stream Analysis capturing the cycle times for the major clinical process steps for the 131 patients seen in an average day, and diagraming the patient movement throughout the clinic from the patient perspective. Afterwards, they mapped and calculated an ideal “future” state and identified waste and opportunities for improvement - many of which incorporated the NCQA’s Patient-Centered Medical Home goal for cooperative team health care. As processes continue to be developed down the line, the team will seek feedback from patient focus groups.

One of the main opportunities for improvement was the implementation of the workflow station. This is a proven method shown by the team at Virginia Mason Medical Center, a leader in Lean Management in health care. A workflow station is a centralized location where the Medical Assistant and the Physician work together and manage patient flow, data entry and records. While the physician is meeting with a patient, the medical assistant will be available at the station, updating records, prioritizing messages or faxes and making arrangements for the next patient for the physician to visit.

Workflow stations optimize the work load throughout the day between the medical assistant and the physician rather than in a batch at the end of the day. This method also helps ensure that all qualified team members are working to their full potential. Lean: Value Stream Analysis in Family Medicine Island West Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) to care for the patient, another important aspect of becoming a Patient-Centered Medical Home. The Island West group was enthusiastic by this concept and eager to begin working toward the implementation of workflow stations in their clinic.

In addition to the workflow stations, the Value Stream Analysis identified three more opportunities for improvement, including 5S workplace organization, implementing standard task operations throughout the clinic, and identifying a discrete identification process for walk-in nurse visits.

The future looks bright for the Family Medicine Clinic - Island West and the participants were all eager to start “Leaning” their clinic. At the end of the day, Adam Spieker, Manager for Process Improvement and leader of the Value Stream Analysis sessions, asked the group how soon they expected to start making changes, there was an almost unanimous exclamation of, “Tomorrow!” Workplace organization has already begun and Dr. Barbara Thompson is working with her Medical Assistant, Angela Cogswell, to pilot the flow station concept in the next six to eight weeks.
“Shelia Keels from Patient Financial Services was recently praised by one of our patients for providing exceptional service. The patient’s husband had been very ill with multiple visits and inpatient stays at UTMB. Her primary concern has been caring for her husband, so when the bills began to roll in, she was simply overwhelmed. She called our Customer Service office and reached Shelia, who she has spoken with numerous times. She described Shelia as extremely professional, polite and above all very patient with her as she walks her through each of the bills and answers all of her questions and concerns.”

“I feel that my care at UTMB was as good as it gets if you have to be in a hospital. Dr. Michale Boyars is an outstanding man in all aspects. I hold him in the highest regard – a special thanks to him for everything. Dr. Leah Low went the extra mile for me and her “Purple Team” performed outstanding. Dr. Shawn Nishi, bent over backwards working to help me, along with Dr. Delasartos and his team.”

“The core care group during my stay at UTMB Galveston was “boots on the ground” staff. I felt that my nurses exceeded in all areas and made me feel special. They were caring professionals, timely, extremely anxious to help and provide. There was always a quick reassuring smile. I especially remember Edith Ngamga, Yanling Feng, Ann Lade, Tammie Gale and Brianna Salinas. The transportation staff all had great personalities. The food staff was very polite and the meals were decent. All staff that I came into contact with were courteous, treated me with respect and above all, I was made to feel that I was special. The actions of the staff were above and beyond – nothing went unnoticed. Although I can’t remember everybody or every department, thanks to all who assisted me at UTMB.”

“Having recently completed my radiation therapy, I wanted to let you know that the experience was not nearly as dreadful as my expectations, much due to the outstanding staff of the Radiation Oncology Clinic. During my nearly two months of visits I never once encountered anything other than first class service and kindest of treatment. This is to include each and every area, starting with the ladies at the reception desk, the nurses in the clinic and all of those who did the actual treatments. Though all I met deserve recognition for their efforts, I want to take a moment to ask you to give a special thank you to Sharon Johnson. She was always able to answer my questions and concerns, and helped me whenever needed.”

“I wanted to share my recent very wonderful care while an inpatient at UTMB. Dr. Ronald Lindsey performed an Anterior Disc Fusion on me last month. I stayed in the hospital overnight. The nursing care I received was excellent. Melissa Richey, Lauren Brownley and Jennifer Utter were absolutely wonderful! They were kind, compassionate and came to check on me to make sure my pain was under control. I was on J7C and the room was outstanding. The entire experience couldn’t have been better. Donald Dillon, who brought my breakfast the next morning, was completely polite, attentive and should know he does a great job.”

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT:
- Casey Collier and Wendy Cabello were great nurses! Sheila Valier (Health Unit Coordinator) was also very helpful.
- Dr. James Hunderup, Dr. David Olson and Dr. William Mileski were wonderful!

INPATIENT:
- The care was top notch. The Thoracic Surgery team had a great attitude and it showed throughout the entire experience.
- The Cardiology/Coronary staff was very cheerful, attentive very concerned, compassionate, caring.
- I couldn’t have asked for better nurses: Tamara Thomas, Terry Gray, Beth Westerfield, and Mary Sue Hopkins. (Antepartum Surveillance, Obstetrics)
- The Cardiology nurses went above and beyond to provide needs for my family and me.
- ICU nurses are the perfect nurses - They certainly knew their business.
- Dr. Sidney Worsham (Surgery-Urology) is excellent. I would use him in a heartbeat!! Everyone loves Dr. Robert Beach (Internal Medicine- Nephrology).
- Katie Henson (Nurse Clinician III, Labor & Delivery) was excellent! The nursing staff was extremely kind and helpful. They went above and beyond what was expected.
- Dr. Michael Silva (Vascular Surgery) is above very good in all departments - excellent!
- Dr. Mostafa Borahay (Obstetrics-Gynecology) went the extra mile in taking care of me!

A very special thank you to everyone across UTMB Health who came together to work wonders for seven burn patients on the evening of April 17, including: Jamie Heffernan, April Lane, Paul Brown, Jennifer Haglund, Nelly Garza, Daralyn Johnson, Amy Barrerra-Kovach, Cari Taylor, Debbie Marshal, Foster Sayles, Tammie Vice, Minnie Scott, and the entire Blocker Burn Unit (BBU) team; the ER staff who worked tirelessly in their provision of care; the SICU staff, including Lee Alviza; Susan Court and the MICU staff; Christine Smith; the Respiratory Therapy team, including Yrui Malhotra; Odette Comeau; Shelia Ott and the Occupational Therapy team; the Pharmacy team, including Shawn Carr and Shawn Grimm; Mike Boxley, Sue Powell and the incredible crew in Materials Management; Winnie Richards, Kay Mears, Lynn Smith and the Environmental Services team; the medical staff and students from Dr. William Mileski’s team; the physicians of the burn team, including Flecicia Williams, Tom Granchi, Surjit Rai, Phil Hamby, Will Norbury and Carlos Jimenez; the staff of Ortho Trauma; Carrla Ellyson, Oyebamiji Adebayo, Dianne Fontenot, and the TDC team; the Professional Practice Council team; and every team member not mentioned who contributed to the care of these patients, thank you!
You’ve been Spotted!

Whether it’s decorating a door for the the new Adopt A Stairwell initiative, a Clinic Ribbon Cutting or just a regular day on the job, You never know when we’re going to spot you!