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## Why you can no longer disregard patient engagement



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In today's fiercely competitive world, where nontraditional players in healthcare are aiming to disrupt the industry and seize a share of the pie, healthcare executives need to constantly be on the alert and come up with new strategies for engaging patients across the care continuum. Not only is technology constantly evolving, but there has also been a perceptual shift from fee-for-service to value-based care models in an era of growing healthcare consumerism.

The strategies for patient engagement are diverse and long-term. Leaders need to widen their patient engagement strategies to encompass not just inpatient settings but also to ensure that there is adequate follow-up after patients are discharged from the hospital and throughout their recovery process. According to CipherHealth and Modern Healthcare Custom Media's recent survey, which examined the patient engagement strategies of 217 healthcare leaders, post-discharge follow up was identified by respondents as the major component accounting for a successful patient engagement programme (83%). Although this is seen as a high priority, only 20% of respondents are satisfied with their current programmes.

Although there are barriers to the implementation of effective engagement strategies to help close this gap between the importance of patient engagement and the satisfaction of leaders in their current programmes, such as the costs of technology, staffing and human resources, healthcare organisations can no longer overlook the importance of patient-centred care. Organisations which have moved further along in this journey towards closing the gap are enjoying a significantly competitive edge from their ability to engage proactively with patients.

"Patient engagement is a major differentiator for patients looking for quality care that extends beyond the four walls of the hospital. In today's value-based environment, it will be nearly impossible to succeed without proactive, consistent, and timely interaction between patients and care providers," said Lisa Romano, MSN, RN, CipherHealth's Chief Nursing Officer.

See also [Patient Engagement: What do advocates think?](#)

The value and values of integrated care

In the era of value-based care, health organisations must invest in their long-term success through innovative practices and strategies in patient engagement. Their goal must be to create an integrated experience across the continuum of patient care and to widen their scope of activity to include better healthcare delivery throughout the patient journey.

Integrated care comprises a list of significant and core values which are also generally related to healthcare delivery. According to the most recent study published by the International Journal of Integrated Care, there are 23 values in the current body of knowledge and they can be used as the basis for collaborative and governance processes in integrated care. Some of these values are intense care specific whilst others are more generic. The list includes values such as 'collaborative,' 'co-ordinated,' 'transparent' (intense care specific) and 'goal-oriented,' 'evidence-informed,' 'innovative' and 'safe' (general values related to healthcare delivery).

These values are interdependent and reflective of important goals such as population health, customer experience and cost-effectiveness. For example, the two values of 'sustainable' and 'continuous' relate to cost-effectiveness and the experience of care and population health, respectively. Both are necessary in an integrated care system. If the system is not sustainable, then it cannot continue to deliver continuous care. Additionally, it would be difficult to deliver 'continuous' care for patients if it is not 'comprehensive.'

In order to better understand decision-making and collaborative practices in integrated care, more systematic research into the core values of integrated care is needed. The most innovative healthcare organisations are paying more and more attention to the values of integrated care. This will ensure optimum patient experience, an overall improvement in population health and an increase in staff engagement, allowing these organisations to capture market share and maximise value-based care and payment incentives.

As Romano explains, "Creating a more mature patient engagement strategy does not need to be as resource-intensive as it may seem. Delivering timely, relevant, and helpful interventions to patients during care transitions not only helps improve patient experiences, but also drives better outcomes for your community."

Sources: [International Journal of Integrated Care](#), [Cipherhealth](#), [Modern Healthcare](#)

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