

## *The Patient Experience Post*

Healthcare's Resource for  
Service Excellence  
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Since the mid-1990s, Baird has helped healthcare organizations nationwide improve the patient experience and enhance organizational culture. Baird's culture assessment and diagnosis include experience mapping, medical mystery shopping, and focus groups to reveal the real customer experiences within your organization. Using your patients' experiences, Baird and her team prescribe critical next steps for improving patient satisfaction and HCAHPS scores.

## **Baffled about HCAHPS Scores? Mystery shoppers reveal often-missed details**

*by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA*

Your hospital's reputation depends not only on what your patients say about their experiences, but also what their family members or visitors have to say. After all, they see and hear things that shape their opinions.

To help our hospital clients delve deeper into the patient experiences that impact HCAHPS scores, the Baird Group offers the Care Partner Observer (CPO) as a method to delve deeper into the patient experience. This method of mystery shopping offers the healthcare leaders direct and indirect observation with documentation of facts, as well as the patient's and observer's emotional responses to situations, settings, and encounters. The documentation provides results that can help improve HCAHPS scores.

The CPO is a professional mystery shopper who has been trained by the Baird Group to accompany patients through all, or a portion of, their healthcare appointment or procedure. The CPO is strictly an observer, posing usually as a patient friend or family member, who makes direct observations of the setting, processes, and staff encounters that influence the patient experience. In addition to the direct observation, the CPO interacts with the patient and family member(s) to get their reactions and feelings about the experience throughout the encounter.

One hospital that engaged a CPO to delve deeper into its patient experience gained insight into nurse and discharge communication gaps. The patient had been given two pages of discharge instructions while she was first regaining consciousness after anesthesia, and before she had been returned to her room. When the nurse offered to review her discharge instructions, the patient stated, "I wasn't given instructions." The CPO had noticed the transporter moved the papers from the patient's bed to the computer stand when the patient returned to her room from the operating room. No verbal instructions had been given, nor did anyone mention the green sheets of paper were discharge instructions.

From the patient perspective, she wasn't aware that she had been given papers. The CPO was able to observe this transaction and report where the gap had occurred. This documentation helped the hospital staff establish a new process that included scripting during the handoff of patient discharge instructions.

To learn more about how to engage a Care Partner Observer, contact Stacy Wagner at (920) 563-4684 or [stacy@baird-group.com](mailto:stacy@baird-group.com).

*Learn more about ways you can ensure that all of your customer interactions, including over-the-phone interactions, support your healthcare organization's brand, as in [Living Your Brand Promise](#), featuring Kent Seltman, co-author of Management Lessons From Mayo Clinic. As the*



Transforming culture. Shaping patient experience.

former Director of Marketing at Mayo Clinic, Seltman was charged with managing the brand for this world-renowned organization. During this 90-minute presentation, you'll hear about crucial elements in aligning the brand promise with the patient experience in order to build trust and credibility with customers. For only \$89, you'll receive all this: pre-session worksheets, a session workbook, webinar slides, and an audio CD of the 90-minute webinar, complete with the Q&A session.

Invite Baird to speak at your next leadership development event! To learn more about the [Baird Model for Service Excellence](#), employee engagement workshops, or to sign up for her FREE newsletter, write to [info@baird-group.com](mailto:info@baird-group.com).

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Nurse, author, and consultant Kristin Baird, "Healthcare's Customer Service Guru," is the author of *Raising the Bar on Service Excellence: The Health Care Leader's Guide to Putting Passion into Practice* (Golden Lamp Press, 2008), *Reclaiming the Passion: Stories that Celebrate the Essence of Nursing* (Golden Lamp Press, 2004), and *Customer Service In Healthcare: A Grassroots Approach to Creating a Culture of Service Excellence* (Jossey Bass, 2000).