

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.

Inconsistent, unreliable, and downright rude

Article by: Angela Fieler, MPA, CMQ/OE, Senior Consultant

I will admit that I have a touch of cabin fever. I self-quarantined for two weeks after returning from Seattle, just after the first COVID-19 death was reported there. Just as my self-imposed isolation was ending, the President and CDC advised people to stay at home unless absolutely necessary and today, the county I live in executed a "stay at home" order.

Luckily, everyone in my house, including my 85 year old mom, has remained symptom-free. Despite this, all of us have had the opportunity to interact with the healthcare system. The variation in those interactions has been stunning. All of us suffer from typical long-term health issues that have been well managed with medication for many years. None of us have had any changes to our medication or dosage for at least 5 years and we all needed medication refills. My primary care provider called me to let me know that they were rescheduling my appointment for three months from now and that they had already ordered a three month supply of meds to see me through. My husband didn't hear from his primary care provider, so he called and was told that his visit would be handled over skype and that they had permission from our insurance company to charge the normal rate so he was still going to be responsible for his normal co-pay. My mom's primary care provider never called either. When I called to inquire, the receptionist was curt in informing me that they certainly would have called if her appointment had been cancelled or needed to be rescheduled. When I reminded her that my mom is 85 and is in the highest risk group for contracting the virus, she insisted that my mom would have to come in to be seen and that she had to go to the lab before the doctor would order any refills.

I took my mom to the lab for her required tests. The door to the lab was covered with 42 (not exaggerating – I counted them!) paper signs with large red stop signs on them. Underneath the word "stop" were two large bullets. The first one said "We do NOT do COVID-19 tests here. Go see your doctor and get referred to public health." How nice of them. The second bullet said "DO NOT ENTER IF YOU HAVE A FEVER OR A COUGH." Not to be deterred, we entered at what felt like our own risk. Who were these people and when did they forget that they were human beings caring for human beings? They had plenty of hand sanitizer and gloves on their side of the desk. There was nothing for the people who had to use the keypad at the kiosk to check in and then pull the door handle to enter the testing area.

Now let's fast forward to my mom's actual visit. When we arrived, the parking lot was completely roped off. There were no signs and no cars, so I wasn't sure the practice was even open. I called and was told they were preparing to set up a COVID-19 testing tent and that I had to find another place to park. My mom uses a walker so I asked if I could either pull in just to let my mom out or



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if I could come in and get a wheel chair. The person I spoke with suggested I park by the dumpster because it wasn't that far.

I get that these are unprecedented times and that everyone, particularly people in healthcare, is stressed. I hate that so many of my friends and family are putting their lives on the line every day because they have chosen a career in healthcare. What better time to show that you care than now?

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