

# The Importance of Patient Satisfaction Surveys

Within any healthcare organization, patient satisfaction surveys are critical for measuring quality and for obtaining meaningful feedback to help identify areas in need of improvement and to recognize gaps in your system. Patient satisfaction surveys can improve your services and help you meet your goals as a healthcare organization at the highest level.

CMS has been moving toward quality-based and patient-centered care for years and there is no indication that it will stop. Patient satisfaction surveys are key to your business as part of a continuous quality improvement process. Tracking and reporting on patient experience helps you show patients, the public, employees, and third-party payors that your clients and patients are receiving the care they need and deserve.



When selecting a survey program, make sure that it is easy to use. If it is not easy for your staff or patients to use, they won't use the program and you won't get usable data. Be sure to select a program that allows you to anonymously benchmark your data against surveys from other clinics. This ensures you the greatest benefit for your investment of time (and money, if you must pay for the service). Most importantly, ask questions that work toward getting helpful responses from your patients.

As you evaluate your patient satisfaction surveys, be sure to engage every member of the care team. It is the team, the entire office staff, who influence the results. Patientcare and safety aren't just the responsibility of the provider, they are everyone's responsibility. If you receive pushback from your staff, remind them that, by improving your patients' experiences, your clinic improves and moves towards becoming the provider of choice in your neighborhood.

How do you build a culture of patient-centered care? Start by listening to your patient's survey comments. Then, build a partnership with the office team to implement changes that will benefit your patients. Strive for consistency in analyzing your surveys every month and implementing process improvements. Watch your scores rise and report your successes.

Take the first step, ask the right questions and get answers from your patients. Follow up by doing something proactive with that data. By working together as a team, you will improve all aspects of quality in your clinics, including improved staff satisfaction. Contact me if you have questions about choosing a Patient satisfaction program that would meet your needs as a rural health clinic.

**Kate Hill**

The Compliance Team

[khill@thecomplianceteam.org](mailto:khill@thecomplianceteam.org)