



Getting Off to the Right Start - Staff Guidance for Working with your Network Patient Representative

CMS defines patient engagement as....

“Patients and families are partners in defining, designing, participating in and assessing the care practices and systems that serve them to assure they are respectful of and responsive to individual preferences, needs and values. This collaborative engagement allows the individual’s values to guide all clinical decisions and drives genuine transformation in attitudes, behaviors and practice.” Having a Network Patient Representative (NPR) brings this level of patient engagement to your clinic.

Once your clinic has identified who your NPR(s) is/are it is important to get off to a good start by communicating with your NPR about their role, how they’d like to be involved and to develop a plan for working together. The clinic’s role is equally important to the success of the NPR at your clinic. Although the Network is available for resources and support, there needs to be a strong partnership between the clinic and the NPR. **The clinic should identify at least one person to be the Clinic Staff Coordinator.** Although all staff can engage in different activities with the NPR, this individual is the main point of contact. Typically this is the person who initially recommended the NPR for the role, a clinic manager or social worker.



Collaboration

Collaborate with the NPR to develop and implement patient engagement activities.



Committment

Commit to supporting the NPR in their role.



Care

Use the NPR as the patient voice to improve the patient experience of care.



Getting Started

Review NPR Handbook with the patient and discuss it with them.

- Start where the patient is. What did the team envision when you recommended them to be a NPR? Review the role of the NPR.
 - What are they interested in doing?
 - Do they want to be a “sounding board” - give input or a “ring leader” - actively plan activities?
 - What ideas do they have to improve the patient experience at your clinic?

Review clinic resources and share ideas on what topics NPRs think patients need information on. What has been most helpful to them on their journey? What was missing or could have been better?

- Share about how your clinic conducts patient education (is there a staff member that does the bulletin boards... do they want to assist them?).
- What type of peer-to-peer support are they interested in? Mentoring? Welcoming new patients? Attending or starting a support group?
- Share about any Network projects you are involved in and how they can assist? Do they want to give feedback on the resources? Attend QAPI meetings to provide a patient perspective?

Encourage the patient to use the Network resources that are available.

- The new NPR Kick off webinar is available online at www.heartlandkidney.org.
- Attend monthly NPR Connection Calls: 2nd Thursday and Friday of each month at 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm (CST).
- Use the Patient Engagement Calendar, Topic of the Month sheets and My Kidney Kit.
- Share how your clinic uses the Network resources and discuss ideas on how to use them in the future.



Review the clinic grievance policy and procedures with the NPR. It is not their role to address grievances. However, other patients may share concerns with them and this gives you an opportunity to discuss how the process works proactively. They can share the processes available with other patients.

- Review the My Network: What to do if I Have a Concern page.
- Review the Forum of ESRD Networks Grievance Toolkit with them.
- If you have a suggestion box, consider reviewing them together to get ideas on how to address patient concerns.

Review confidentiality and privacy. Since the NPR is not a staff member, they are not bound by HIPPA, however, they should keep information shared by other patients in confidence unless they give them permission or the patient is at risk of harm.

- Review the tips for setting boundaries and patient privacy.
- If your clinic has a formal volunteer program you may ask them to complete extra training which could address confidentiality.

Get your Team involved.

- Introduce the NPR to your team and discuss your new partnership.
- Invite the NPR to a team huddle or staff meeting.
- Make sure everyone from your Medical Director to Administrative Assistant is on board and available to support the NPR.
- Determine how other staff can be involved to support the NPR.



Help the NPR introduce themselves in the role. Current NPRs have done so by:

- Writing a letter (a sample is in the NPR Handbook) that can be posted, handed out and included in new patient packets.
- Allow the NPR to meet and greet other patients on the treatment floor (at an appropriate time with appropriate precautions) or with a lobby day.
- Have a business card printed with their contact information to give to patients.

Invite the patient to the first 10-15 minutes of your clinic's quality assurance and performance improvement meeting to:

- Ask for their perspective on any of your current challenges and projects you are working on.
- Discuss your clinic's grievance trends (not individual issues) and how to improve the patient experience of care.
- Review additional information on this topic on the Network website and in the NPR Handbook.

Schedule time to meet on a regular basis (at least monthly). In the beginning you may need to meet more often.

- Put your plan into action.
- Plan to review any resources shared on the NPR Connection Calls or the NPR Connection e-newsletter provided by e-mail monthly.

For more information or to file a grievance, please contact: Qsource ESRD Network 12
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