Lahey Hospital & Medical Center
Patient & Family Advisory Council

Established November 2009

Annual Report:
October 2012 - September 2013

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Summary:
Lahey Hospital & Medical Center (Lahey) Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC) continues to grow and be very active and productive in its fourth year. The PFAC continues to meet six times annually at times that accommodate members’ schedules. Committee membership includes patients and family members (advisors) and Lahey (staff) members. Agenda items and activities for review are determined by the advisors in collaboration with staff members, to ensure that topics are meaningful to the advisors and support Lahey’s strategic initiatives and program development agenda. The PFAC has engaged with a number of leaders and members of Lahey, including, but not limited to, the chief operating officer, chief nursing officer, chief medical officer(s), departmental directors, managers, and front line colleagues. Two members share the co-chairmanship positions, one advisor and one staff member. Over the past year new members have joined the PFAC and others have completed their commitment and moved to other endeavors such as serving as members of standing Hospital committees working on focused project groups. We are grateful to the members who have served over this past year and welcome our new members.

Purpose and Goals:
The purpose of the Patient and Family Advisory Council is to advise Lahey Hospital & Medical Center on matters pertaining to the relationship between patients, patients’ families, and Lahey staff. The council members will pertaining to the relationship between patients, patients' families, and Lahey staff.. The council will also facilitate discussion regarding health care services within the context of Lahey Hospital & Medical Center and the greater health care environment. Patients and family members will have a principal role in determining projects to undertake.

Goals of the Patient and Family Advisory Council include:

- To promote the principles of patient-provider partnership and patient/family centered care at Lahey Hospital & Medical Center
- To provide and communicate the unique perspective of the patient and family to the clinical and operational leaders and staff at Lahey Hospital & Medical Center
- To provide advice, consultation, evaluation and recommendations regarding programs, educational efforts, selected research activities and operational initiatives that affect patients and families at Lahey Hospital & Medical Center would want to add their involvement in technology decisions (not sure of the correct language-they looked at several patient portals)

Membership:
The PFAC is comprised of 15-20 current patients or family members and 5-8 Lahey Hospital & Medical Center leaders, referred to as staff members. Recruitment efforts are ongoing to support a membership that is reflective of the diverse populations served by Lahey Hospital and Medical Center. Advisors have utilized a variety of inpatient, ambulatory, primary care, emergent care and/or specialty services across the organization. The co-chair positions are shared by one advisor and one staff member. The co-chairs set the agenda in collaboration with other PFAC members. A member of the Quality & Safety Department serves as liaison to the PFAC as needed.
Membership is refreshed through ongoing recruitment. Patients or family members who have received care at Lahey for at least one year and who are able and willing to participate objectively, make decisions by consensus and support the values of Lahey are eligible to become members. Potential advisors may be recommended by existing or past PFAC members, Lahey physicians and other colleagues or may self-refer as potential members as posited on the Lahey website, http://www.lahey.org/Patient_and_Visitor_Information/Patient_Information/Patient_and_Family_Advisory_Council.aspx.

The membership agrees to meet at least quarterly and has met 6 times annually since its inception. The meetings are scheduled every other month, odd months, from 4:30 – 6:30. Meals are provided and advisors are provided with free parking.

**Member Role responsibility:**
- Attend and participate at meetings
- Assist with development of agenda items
- Participate in hospital committee meetings and work groups

**Advisor Orientation and Education:**

Advisors are oriented to the purpose and goals of the committee and to confidentially requirements of the committee. Advisors are educated to elements of confidentiality policy, provided an opportunity to ask questions about the policy and sign a confidentiality statement.

Continuing education is provided at meeting related to agenda items, prior to discussion of the topic, as needed. Education is provided related to quality and patient safety topics to understand the quality metrics in health care and the rationale for publically reported measures. Members have been educated related to current best practices in patient experience, changes in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) regulations related to inpatient and observation patient status and the related positive and negative impacts to patients and their families. Education was provided specific to potential impact to patient of Lahey Health related to the NECC compounding pharmaceutical company and medications considered to be “tainted”. Lahey Health patients were not given any of these preparations from NECC.

Patient advisors actively work with Patient Education Committee. Advisors are in process of recruitment for participation ACO implementation

**PFAC Impact and Accomplishments:**

During the past year, patients and families from the Committee have been active on existing and new Hospital committees, work groups and strategic initiatives.

**Patient Identification Committee:**
- Patient Identification (ID) issues: PFAC member of the Hospital Patient ID committee and committee members continue to discuss and plan further action to include patients and families in the patient ID process.
  - Patient instruction poster regarding identifiers, ID process in each outpatient exam room maintained
  - Trials explored for new ID bands
  - Explored better options for patient identifiers, including biometrics, RFID, vein readers
  - Patient member actively involved in patient ID activities of other local hospitals
  - Red Rules for patient ID under review by committee
PT ID video now available for patient and family review on website
Patient Billing issues and Obstacles to “Patient Friendly Billing Committee”:
Patient Financial Services/Billing:
On-going discussion regarding specific billing and patient account issues that affect patient experience
Ongoing discussions with patient account department, senior administrators regarding problem areas and opportunities for simplification of patient billing
Review of facility fee billing for hospital based clinics reviewed and feedback provided

**Appointments on Demand:**
Performance improvement team, with patient representation, working to review and redesign access for patients.
- New appointment process
  - Hospital follow-up appointments
  - “Sick’ visits, other appointment types
  - Collaboration with EPIC implementation team to recommend processes for easy access

**Environmental design and construction:**
Hospital teams with patient representation continue to collaborate on environmental design and new construction projects. Work includes, but not limited to:
- Signage and way-finding projects
- Environmental improvement projects – Redesign Main Entrance Lobby and bathroom facilities continuous to the lobby. Healing colors and improvements in flow are planned. Implementation begins September 2013.
- Accessibility and comfort improvements for outpatient areas – redesign waiting areas with improvements in seating, use of natural, outside light, art and other entertainment features have been included. Improvements in hospitality have been implemented.

**Accessibility and ADA Oversight Committee**
Goals: To review, update and re-design the inpatient/outpatient environment for patients and families with disabilities in accordance with the recommendations promoted by the ADA.
- Programmatic Enhancements
  - Completed focused review of plant and environmental aspects of accessibility
  - Structural change in entryways completed to increase safety and convenience for access
  - Public restrooms redesign near complete
  - Adapted outside walkway to ensure dry, safe transition from garage to main hospital
  - Increased the number of handicap parking spaces available

**Transitions of Care Committee**
This Hospital committee is charged with identifying and improving care at the transition points to keep patients safe. This committee continues its work implementing improvements that include:
- Patient-friendly and usability of the discharge documents, including patient instructions, medication sheet, patient teaching and information material
  - Focused attention to literacy level to achieve usability goals
  - Hospital follow-up appointments
Discharge Summary redesign, with the development if a discharge assistant tool this year
Improving communication between inpatient caregivers and primary care physicians at the point of discharge regarding the patients’ acute inpatient episodes and outpatient plan of care
Redesigning and strengthening care planning process for patients and families with very complex and high acuity health problems

Patient Experience

- Reducing avoidable readmissions by improving communication with patients and families
  - Educational initiatives for patients and families
  - Patients and family members work in collaboration with the Patient Education team to improve communications in print and other media
    - Use of redesigned white boards in patient rooms validated by membership
  - Hospitalist care improvements
  - Communication with primary care physicians while in hospital
    - Patient and family
    - Attending MD to PCP communication
    - Coordination of Care for patients
    - How to educate patients – how to optimize patients’ understanding of and partnership with Hospital Medicine providers
    - Improvements in the content and design of the “clinical summary” proposed and implemented

Branding/Marketing Overview:

- New Logo/branding designs for Lahey Health were presented for review and comment by the membership.
- Results of a marketing survey were reviewed with the following topics identified as important:
  - Accessibility & Convenience
  - Customer Service
  - Respect
  - Listening and understanding Patient concerns

PFAC Goals for October 2013 – September 2014

- Engaging patient and family in care and transitions
- Continuation of on-going work from prior year(s)
- Patient education initiatives to improve care and decrease avoidable readmissions
- Redesigning care: targeted care areas
- Continually working to ensuring diversity of patient membership on hospital committees and initiatives
References:

Hospital Council Policies and Procedures (MA 130.1800 and 130.1801 required policies and procedures)