THE PATH TO PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

Research shows that patients who feel a personal connection with their providers are more informed, engaged, and satisfied with their care, as well as more loyal to their care facilities. There are simple and positive steps community health centers (CHCs) can take to achieve these goals.

Obtain Staff Buy-in at All Levels
The appearance and cleanliness of the CHC, demeanor of frontline staff, and staff’s ability to interact with patients in a culturally competent manner strongly impacts patient experience.

Enhance Ability to Communicate
To effectively connect with patients, staff and providers must be able to clearly explain situations, invite questions, and help patients comfortably express their needs and preferences.

Implement New Models of Care
Utilizing a team-based care model helps build a sense of connectedness between patients and their care facilities, enhances patients’ information, and bolsters satisfaction.

Help Patients Take an Active Role
Encouraging patient involvement by simply inviting them to participate in decisions about their care helps patients feel more involved and satisfied with their role in decision making.

Use Mobile and Web Technologies
Communicating through email and text messages, and providing online information, communication resources and decision aids, can help providers build engagement and improve the patient experience.

Among low-income patients who say that someone at their healthcare facility knows them fairly well, 64% rate their care as excellent or very good. That drops sharply – to 40% – for those who lack a personal connection.

Among patients who feel informed about their health, 67% are comfortable asking questions of their providers; and among the most informed nearly 7 in 10 are strongly confident in their ability to participate in decision making.

Among patients who have team-based care, 57% feel very informed about their health. That sense of feeling informed falls sharply, to 38%, among those without team care.

Among patients who don’t feel encouraged to participate, a mere 36% are satisfied with their care.

Currently just 23% of low-income patients communicate with their providers by email, and only 16% by text. However, among those who do, a full 87% say they find it useful, including 53% who say it’s “very” useful.