Not Sure What Medical Chart Information to Share With Patients? Just Ask the Patients!

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When Planetree Designated® Patient-Centered Hospital Northern Westchester Hospital (NWH) in Mt. Kisco, New York, set about to improve the shared bedside medical record process, early questions revolved around what information should be shared, and how that information should be communicated. The obvious response to this highly patient-centered organization was to start with the stakeholders through the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC).

Northern Westchester’s PFAC first began working together in 2007 and consists of a formal group of committed patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals working together. This mature group, already experienced in contributing to enhancing the quality of care and service delivered through on-going, two-way communication between NWH and its patients and families, was the perfect forum to tackle this task. As cautious as hospitals can be about sharing the medical record at the bedside, PFAC members explained that patients are just as anxious to see the record. For this reason the PFAC established criteria that in order for the information to be valuable to patients it must be:

1. Easy to access
2. Intuitive
3. Convenient
4. Understandable

Specific categories of information, prioritized by PFAC members, included caregiver identification, medications, diet and nutrition, vital signs, certain lab test results, the plan for the day, discharge date and preparatory information, as well as access to a robust patient education video library. In order to deliver on the initial criteria, NWH partnered with Allen Technologies to develop a hospital grade tablet that met privacy and infection control concerns. PFAC members had opportunities to handle various pieces of hardware in a model lab until consensus was reached on the optimal device. The tablet has built-in anti-theft and a dedicated charging station located on the patient’s bedside table. The tablet is easily removed from the charging station and can be used anywhere in the patient’s room.

At the touch of a finger, patients can readily access My Chart to see current and relevant information specific to them individually:

- **Who is Caring for Me?** includes photos and credentials of physicians, nurses, technicians, therapists, and other hospital caregivers.
- **What Are My Meds?** displays medication names, doses, indications, side effects, and interactions, all in patient-friendly language
- **What Is My Diet and Nutrition?** spells out the details of any special diet
- **What Are My Vital Signs?** contains definitions of each vital sign, and graphically displays individual results and therapeutic ranges.
- **What are My Lab Results?** includes lab results most relevant to a patient’s progress and recovery and are displayed in red/yellow/green stoplight formats.
- **What is My Plan for the Day?** lists the daily schedule to include times of tests and procedures
- **What Is My Discharge Plan?** begins on admission with anticipated discharge date, expectations, and instructions. Using the tablet, patients are oriented to accessing their own inpatient records after discharge through a dedicated patient portal.
- **What Do I Need to Know?** contains a rich database of educational videos about conditions, diagnoses, surgeries, health and wellness and much more. Each time a patient watches an educational video, the system sends a message to the patient’s medical record. This alerts nurses and helps augment patient education.
Still in its infancy and implemented on only the Medical/Surgical inpatient units, early indicators of success include high utilization of accessing information about medication, lab results and patient education videos. Additionally, patients enjoy the Compliment a Staff member feature, allowing them to send a message of gratitude to a member of their care team. Patients also appreciate the feature of requesting specialty services directly from the tablet (housekeeping, integrative medicine, patient advocacy, chaplain, health librarian, financial assistance), all available at the bedside! HCAHPS scores are being monitored with specific interest in impacting the domains of communication, responsiveness, medication explanation and transitions of care.

The success of this project thus far is largely attributed to the patient’s voice heard through NWH’s Patient and Family Advisory Council which continues to sit as a reactor panel to evaluate effectiveness and provide advice on next steps. One of the NWH PFAC members, Karen Samson, also volunteers her time to round on medical/surgical units, educating patients about the use of the tablet and enrolling patients in the dedicated meaningful use patient portal. “It is such a great thing to see patients light up when I tell them the tablet is for them. Seeing the information displayed in a way that is understandable opens the door for patients and families to ask questions and have a meaningful dialogue with nurses and physicians. Then when I show them how they can access the information using the portal, they are so happy. This is what patient empowerment is all about – putting information directly in patient hands so that they can use it to take control of their health!”

To learn more about this program contact Maria Hale, Vice President, the Office of Patient and Family Advocacy and Patient Centered Support Service at Northern Westchester Hospital: 914-666-1951 or mhale@nwhc.net.

![The NWH Patient Bedside Tablet with My Chart - a uniquely patient-centered view of my medical record](image.png)