PATIENT PREFERENCES PASSPORT
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

A PLANETREE PUBLICATION

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About Planetree
About the Patient Preferences Passport

Patient activation has been identified as the “blockbuster drug of the century” (Health Affairs, Feb. 2013). That’s a dramatic statement, to be sure, but it is based on evidence that engaging with patients and family members in decision-making, care planning and evaluation of outcomes—in other words, engaging with them as important members of their own care team—is a potent determinant of high quality, high value healthcare. *(For more information, refer to this Patient and Family Engagement Briefing).*

This bold declaration that patient activation yields better healthcare outcomes at lower costs has rallied many in the field to examine what it means to engage patients and family members. Planetree has been examining this question for nearly 40 years—by asking patients and family members how they want to interact with their healthcare providers, developing approaches for operationalizing care processes and creating resources to facilitate those kind of compassionate, respectful and mutually constructive interactions.

Others in the field are advancing patient and family engagement in significant ways through research, designing curricula for medical education, writing policy and more. Planetree continues to do what we do best: take the most current knowledge and evidence about patient and family engagement, including the voices of patients themselves, and use it to devise concrete and actionable solutions for change. One such solution is the Patient Preferences Passport.

*The Patient Preferences Passport*

The Patient Preferences Passport is a user-friendly, patient-owned tool that consolidates important patient information, ranging from medical diagnoses and prescriptions to patient-report details such as personal health goals, care preferences, their most pressing concerns and what supports they rely on to manage their health – all captured in the patient’s own voice. The questions included in the passport derive from patients and family members themselves, drawing on personal experiences of what they felt was important for their caregivers to know when planning their care.
The primary purpose of the passport is to two-fold:

1. Owned and maintained by the patient, it supports patients in consolidating, managing and sharing their own healthcare information. Patients are encouraged to bring their completed passport with them to medical appointments, and update it regularly as their healthcare needs, regimens and goals evolve.

2. The passport provides a vehicle for capturing patient-reported information above and beyond what is traditionally maintained in their medical record. Such information includes patients’ personal preferences relative to their healthcare, how they cope with medical conditions, activities they need assistance with and their goals. Capturing this vital patient-reported information is the first step in being able to individualize care plans to accommodate patient preferences and goals.

**What Patients Have to Say about the Passport**

“What I also love about the Passport is that it puts some power and responsibility for care in [the patient’s] hands—creating a framework for true partnership. I hope more organizations will take advantage of this simple and free tool to engage patients, improve medication reconciliation, and even introduce the tough conversation about end-of-life care.”

“This is a way for patients to feel more empowered from the time they walk in the door and feel a little more in control.”

**Integrating the Passport into Care Processes**

This workbook is provided to support offices in integrating the passport into care processes. Efforts have been made to address common challenges and questions, and to provide viable solutions. That said, no two offices operate the same. Providers have unique styles – as do patients. For this reason, the implementation steps and strategies outlined here are to be used as a basis for customizing an implementation plan that will be most effective for your office, your providers and your patients.

**Additional Information on the Patient Preferences Passport**

- [Why You Need a Passport in the Emergency Room](#)
- [Patient Passports Make Sure People with Complex Cases Are Heard](#)
- [The Planetree Patient Preferences Passport: An Innovative Tool to Drive Patient and Family Engagement](#)
Considerations for Implementing the Patient Preferences Passport

Deployment of the patient preferences passport is a recommended strategy for capturing vital patient-reported data on their personal preferences and goals to promote a more collaborative approach to care planning and decision-making. These are critical factors for engaging patients and those closest to them as integral members of the care team. Engagement will not occur, however, merely by distributing patient passports. The following components of a comprehensive approach for integrating the passport into care processes all work together to transform the passport from one more handout to one that effectively shifts the focus of patient visits from the question of “What is the matter?” to “What matters most to you today?” In other words, use of the passport facilitates more collaborative care planning that addresses the patient’s most pressing concerns, their goals (in their own words) and decision making guided by not only the clinicians’ expertise, but also the patients’ preferences and values.

Which patients should receive the passport?
While there is value to all patients completing a patient preferences passport, it is recommended that initial deployment of the passport be targeted toward patients with complex and/or chronic conditions that require attention to ongoing healthcare needs. Given the sheer frequency with which such patients interact with a variety of healthcare providers, as well as the impact their health conditions may have on their daily lives, use of the passport can be a valuable tool to both support these individuals in managing their healthcare information across episodes, as well as to deepen their partnerships with their care teams.

When should patients be provided the passport to complete?
The intent of the passport is to facilitate a richer, more constructive dialogue between the patient (and their family caregivers) and the care team. To achieve this, best practice is providing the patient the passport in advance of a visit. See page 10 for suggestions of when and how to distribute the passport to patients to maximize its benefit.

How is the information in the passport incorporated into care planning and treatment discussions?
Part of the rooming process should be asking patients what information in their passport they want to discuss with the provider and/or reviewing with the patient their responses to these three key questions:

- “Right now, this is what I need most…”
- “What bothers me most about my health condition is…”
- “I am seeking treatment because I want to be able to…”

The responses to these questions will help to shape the agenda for the visit, as well as the planning and decision-making that transpires.
How do we ensure the information in the passport is effectively shared among all members of the care team?

An early step in readying the office to deploy the passports is to map the passport questions to your electronic health record. You will likely find that a number of the questions in the passport map directly to existing fields in the EHR. Use of the passport, therefore, provides a more patient-centered approach for capturing the information you are likely already soliciting (though perhaps in more of an one-directional interview.) What’s more, because the patient has completed the passport in advance, they will likely be more prepared to answer these questions, making the process for efficient and effective. You will also likely find, however, that some fields are not represented in the EMR. To be clear, not all the passport questions need to be integrated into the EHR. As a team, identify any vital patient information from the passport not currently captured in the EHR that you would want to create a customized field for.

How do we confirm shared understanding of the information in the passport?

The passport can be an invaluable tool for ensuring the patient/family and the care team are all on the same page. The tool can be used by providers to confirm the patient and family member’s understanding of their diagnosis and next steps, i.e. “Let’s talk about what you will document in your passport about what we have spoken about today. In your own words, what is your condition/diagnosis and what are the next steps?”

Providers, though, should also “teach back” to the patient their own understanding of the patient’s most pressing concerns and goals.

How do patients and the care team use the passport as the patient’s health status changes over time?

The passport is not intended to be a static document. Its contents will evolve as the patient’s condition and their experience of managing their health evolves. To guard against the passport documenting only one moment in time, it is essential that measures be put into place to encourage patients to routinely update their passport and to, in turn, update patients’ care plan and medical record to reflect any changes.

After the first usage of the passport, this can be achieved by asking patients during the check-in process if they have made any updates to the passport.
## Patient Preferences Passport Implementation Plan

### GETTING THE OFFICE PASSPORT READY

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<th>STEP 1</th>
<th>Familiarize all members of the care team with the passport.</th>
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<td>There is no better way to orient all members of the care team to the patient preferences passport than to have everyone in the office complete their own passport. Not only does this model the level of patient engagement you are seeking to promote among your patients, but your experiences will inform decisions about when you will distribute the passports, what information you will integrate into the EHR, and more. A week or so after distributing the passports, solicit feedback from team members on the tool. This can be done during a morning huddle or a staff meeting.</td>
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<th>STEP 2</th>
<th>Identify the members of the implementation team.</th>
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<td>Before your office is ready to go “live” with the patient passport, a number of functional decisions will need to be made about how (at least initially) the passport will be integrated into your workflow. Determine who will be making those decisions, and engage that group as the implementation team. Be mindful of who in the office will be on the frontlines of using the tool, as well as what other supports you will need to make the initiative successful. It will be important to engage providers, other clinical staff, front desk personnel, and your EHR functional expert.</td>
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<th>STEP 3</th>
<th>Involve patients early on in decision-making on how to maximize the value of the patient passport.</th>
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<td>Consider how you can ensure the effort is informed by the patient voice. If you have a patient and family advisory council, enlist that group to complete their own passports and provide feedback on questions like when it would be best to receive the passport, which questions they think are most important, etc. If you don’t have a patient and family advisory council, consider some beta testing of the tool before any decisions are made. Ask a handful of patients who you are very familiar with to take a look at the tool and share their impressions with you of how they would be interested in using it. Their ideas can then inform future implementation decisions.</td>
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<th>STEP 4</th>
<th>Map the passport questions to your EHR.</th>
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<td>To minimize redundancy in questions posed to patients (a real source of frustration to patients!) identify which questions in the passport map to existing fields in the EHR. For the remaining questions and prompts in the passport, as a group, decide what needs to be captured in the EHR that is not currently being documented. Feedback from patients will be particularly valuable for helping you to identify the most important information from the patient’s point of view.</td>
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### STEP 5
**Determine criteria for patients who will be encouraged to use the passport**

While there is value to all patients completing a patient preferences passport, it is recommended that initial deployment of the passport be targeted toward patients with complex and/or chronic conditions that require ongoing healthcare needs. Criteria for patients who would be good passport candidates may include:

-Patients with specific chronic condition diagnoses
-Patients who have been in the office > 3x in the last 3 months
-Patients who have been struggling with self-management

Once these criteria are in place, implement a system wherein patients who meet these criteria are flagged in advance of a visit so that the office is cued to provide the patient with a passport. Patients identified as good passport candidates should also be brought to the attention of the care team during daily huddles as a reminder that the passport should be integrated into their visit.

### STEP 6
**Determine a workflow to support reliable use of the passport for appropriate patients**

Patient passports can be distributed to patients in advance of their visit, upon arrival at the office, or after their visit (to be used for future visits). See page 10 for a breakdown of how each of these workflows unfolds. Recognize, as well, that you are selecting a workflow to test. You will continue to refine the process based on experience and feedback from patients and staff.

### STEP 7
**Educate staff.**

Roll out an education plan for all members of the care team on how you will be using the patient preferences passport. The purpose of the training is to build team members’ competence and confidence in carrying out the processes designed previously in the implementation process.

### STEP 8
**Recognize champions.**

Recognition of staff who steps out on a limb to support patient-centered practices is important for acknowledgment and empowerment of staff to embrace and lead other patient-centered initiatives.

### STEP 9
**Implement, monitor and measure to hardwire the practice.**

Periodic observation of the practice in action is an essential implementation step to promote consistent execution. Complement this observation with data collection on process and outcomes measures related to implementation.
# Patient Preference Passport Work Flow Options

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<th>Option One:</th>
<th>1. Establish specific criteria for patients who would benefit from using the passport. Criteria could include specific chronic conditions, patients who have been to the office &gt; 3 times in the last 3 months, patients identified as struggling with managing their care, etc..&lt;br&gt;2. Create a system for flagging these patients in the EMR&lt;br&gt;3. When a flagged patient is scheduled for an appointment, notify them that they will be receiving a document in the mail that they are asked to complete to the best of their ability before the appointment and to bring it with them to their visit.&lt;br&gt;4. Mail the passport to patients at least one week prior to the visit with a letter describing the purpose.&lt;br&gt;5. During the daily huddle, identify any patients who were sent passports in advance so that the team is prepared to incorporate the passport into the visit.&lt;br&gt;6. See page 11 for more on incorporating the passport into the visit.</th>
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<td>Option Two: UPON CHECK-IN</td>
<td>1. During the daily huddle, identify any good “passport candidates,” i.e. patients coming in that day the team believes would benefit from using the passport.&lt;br&gt;2. Flag the records of these patients such that when they check in, front office staff is cued to provide them with a passport to complete while they are waiting. (See page 11 for talking points when providing the passport to the patients.) The passport should be provided with a brief cover note to explain its purpose.&lt;br&gt;3. In this work flow, it is recommended that specific sections of the passport be tagged as the priority areas for the patient to complete as they wait, as time will likely not allow for the passport to be completed in its entirety. Patients can then be encouraged to complete the rest of the document after the appointment. Recommended sections of the passport to tag (with a post-it, highlighter, etc.) as priorities to complete before the visit include:&lt;br&gt;   - “Right now, this is what I need most:”&lt;br&gt;   - “What bothers me most about my health condition is…”&lt;br&gt;   - “I am seeking treatment because I want to be able to…”&lt;br&gt;4. See page 11 for more on incorporating the passport into the visit.</td>
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| Option 3: POST VISIT | 1. As part of the check-out process, provide the passport to patients after the completion of their visit with a brief explanation of its purpose, and the instruction to complete the document and bring it with them to their next visit. (See page 12 for talking points.)
## Communicating to Patients about the Passport

### Talking Points for the Care Team

| Providing the passport to patients upon check-in | In order to get to know you better and make sure your most pressing concerns are addressed during your appointments here, we have started using this new patient passport tool. It’s for you to keep. But it also helps us. If you keep this up-to-date and bring it to all of your visits, it will help us all to stay on the same page about what is going on with your health, how it’s impacting you and what is most important to you to work on.

I know there is a lot to complete here, and we certainly don’t expect you to fill out the whole passport now. For today’s visit, could you just fill out the three highlighted sections? (Highlight: “Right now what I need most is...”); “What bothers me most about my health condition is...” and “I am seeking treatment because I want to be able to.” |
|---|---|
| During the Rooming Process (for patients provided the passport in advance) | Did you receive the patient passport we sent you in the mail? What did you think of it? I know it may seem like a lot to fill out, but we find it helps us to narrow in on important information so we can provide the best possible care.

Is there anything in particular that you put into your passport that you want to make sure is conveyed to [the provider?]  

In particular, I know [provider] will want to know how you responded to these questions:

- “Right now, this is what I need most:” 
- “What bothers me most about my health condition is...” 
- “I am seeking treatment because I want to be able to...”

Could you share with me any updates you’ve made to the passport since your last appointment? |
| **Agenda setting with the provider** | I understand you are here today because of [insert signs and symptoms,] but first I wanted to check if there are any other concerns you are hoping to discuss. Could you share with me what you indicated in your passport is what you need most today or what is bothering you most about your health condition?”  

*(In the instance that the patients’ priorities of what they’d like to cover seems more extensive than what can realistically be covered): Time may not allow for us to address all of those concerns in a meaningful way. From your perspective, what is the most important thing we cover? We’ll be sure to cover that, and if we can’t get to the other concerns, we’ll schedule another visit.*  

*(If there is a misalignment of what the patient feels is most important to address and what the provider feels is most important to address): I understand you want to come up with a plan for XXX, however, I also think it’s essential we discuss XXXX.* |
| **Providing the passport at the conclusion of the visit** | I’d like you to make a follow-up appointment to come back in X weeks. For that appointment, I’d like to give you this patient passport. Take it with you today, complete it at home and bring it with you when you come back for the follow-up. It’s for you to keep. But it also helps us. If you keep this up-to-date and bring it to all of your visits, it will help us all to stay on the same page about what is going on with your health, how it’s impacting you and what is most important to you to work on.* |
RESOURCE

Sample Letter to Accompany Patient Passport *(print on office letterhead)*

Dear Patient,

Enclosed please find a new tool our office is using as part of our ongoing commitment of providing top quality, personalized care to all our patients.

This Patient Preferences Passport is for you to keep. It is a simple way for you to keep track of what occurs during your medical appointments, and to make sure you always have an up-to-date accounting of your current health information. We’ll review this information with you during each visit to ensure we are all on the same page about your health and healthcare needs.

As you’ll see, the Passport also prompts you to write down what your most pressing concerns are before every visit to our office. This is very important to us so that we can be sure that we meet your needs during each of your appointments. You’ll also be asked to think about your healthcare goals. By documenting these and sharing them with us, we’ll be able to make sure that, together, we plan your care with your personal goals in mind.

**Next Steps**

Please take a few moments to complete this passport in advance of your next appointment on ______________________. Then, bring it with you to that appointment so that we can review it together.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at [insert phone number].

Sincerely,
Reputation

Planetree, Inc. is a mission based not-for-profit organization that partners with healthcare organizations around the world and across the care continuum to transform how care is delivered. Powered by focus groups with more than 50,000 patients, families, and staff, and over 35 years of experience working with healthcare organizations, Planetree is uniquely positioned to represent the patient voice and advance how professional caregivers engage with patients and families. Guided by a foundation in 10 components of patient-centered care, Planetree informs policy at a national level, aligns strategies at a system level, guides implementation of care delivery practices at an organizational level, and facilitates compassionate human interactions at a deeply personal level. Our philosophical conviction that patient-centered care is the “right thing to do” is supported by a structured process that enables sustainable change.

Approach

A very common adage asserts that where there’s a will, there’s a way. If only good intentions were enough to achieve a patient-centered healthcare system, but experience has proven time and time again that desire alone does not generate change. Planetree provides the pathway to change, a structured methodology for humanizing, personalizing and demystifying the patient experience, customized to your organization’s culture and needs. Informed by the stories and insights of patients, long-term care residents, family members and healthcare professionals, the Planetree approach guides organizations in making patient-centered care the centerpiece of a cohesive strategy that accelerates quality improvement and positions your organization to create change that will last through:

- Development of **infrastructures** to support change
- Implementation of patient-preferred **practices**
- Transformation of organizational **culture**.
Solutions
To achieve this, Planetree offers a range of solutions, including on-site assessments and staff development, virtual training, speaking engagements and immersion programs to steer organizations toward a patient-centered future. Fundamental to our approach is the belief that connecting staff with the purpose of their work, and educating them with new skills in a supportive, empowering environment unleashes their potential as effective change agents. Our menu of coaching, education and experiential offerings focuses on:

- Discovering the most powerful levers of change in an organization
- Activating caregivers to problem solve and create change
- Advancing these efforts in the spirit of continuous quality improvement, and
- Innovating to raise the bar for what patients, families and caregivers can expect from a patient-centered healthcare experience.

Planetree provides an unparalleled opportunity to tailor a set of solutions that will advance any organization’s culture change effort.

For more information on coaching and training available to support you in developing your patient-centered culture, visit [www.planetree.org](http://www.planetree.org) or contact Sara Guastello, Director of Knowledge Management at 203-732-7171 or sguastello@planetree.org.