

# Patient Engagement: Patients as Partners in Their Own Health Care

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## Nursing Alliance for Quality Care (NAQC)

### A Powerful Partnership Among the Nation's Leading Nursing and Consumer Organizations

The Nursing Alliance for Quality Care (NAQC) is the nation's only nursing-focused health care quality alliance, working at the intersection of the national quality, prevention and technology agendas to identify opportunities for nursing and to support the good work already underway by nurses and nursing organizations.

#### NAQC goals:

**Performance Measurement** – Strengthening the role of nursing in performance measurement and public reporting.

**Advocacy** – Crafting policy language and calls to action that drive health system changes to improve access and quality of care for patients.

**Leadership** – Grooming nurse-leaders who will advance consumer-centered, high-quality health care.

## Why are Nurses So Important to Patients and Families?

- There are 3.1 million registered nurses in the U.S.
- Nurses are educated to provide care and to advocate on behalf of patients and their families while respecting their values, beliefs and preferences .
- There is a social contract between society and the profession of nursing (American Nurses Association, 2010).
- “This contract acknowledges that nurses will provide care to all who are in need, regardless of their cultural, social or economic standing. Nurses are prepared at any level of education to focus on the patient and family's needs, whether they are physical, psychosocial, or emotional. Evidence that society appreciates the value of this contract is demonstrated by the public's oft-repeated choice for more than a decade, of ranking nursing as the most trusted profession. Nurses, in order to live up to their social contract, place patients first and recognize that patients and families do indeed have choices, and that those choices are to be respected and honored” (Schumann, 2012, p. 1).

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## Patient Engagement – A Critical Cornerstone of Patient Safety and Quality



**Patient-Centered Care** - Honors the whole person and family, respects individual values and choices, and ensures continuity of care. When care is patient-centered, patients will say, “They gave me exactly the help I want (and need) exactly when I want (and need) it.” (Adapted from RWJF Aligning Forces for Quality, Transforming Care at the Bedside).

**Engagement** - “Actions individuals must take to obtain the greatest benefit from the health care services available to them.” (Center for Advancing Health, 2010, p. 2).

**Engagement behavior framework (EBF)** - Provides a model with ten measurable expectations for an individual's behavior (find safe, decent care, communicate with health care professionals, organize health care, pay for health care, make good treatment decisions, participate in treatment, promote health, get preventive health care, plan for the end of life, and seek health knowledge). These behaviors facilitate people seeking and utilizing safe care. They also guide an orientation toward patient-centeredness. (Gruman, Holmes-Rovner, French, Feffress, Sofaer, Shaller, & Prager, 2010).

**Patient Activation** - “Individual's knowledge, skill, and confidence for managing his/her own health and health care.” (Hibbard, J.H. and Mahoney, E., 2010, p.377).

**Patient Activation Measure (PAM)** - A valid and highly reliable scale that reflects a developmental model of activation. In this model, there are four stages that a patient must take to be activated in their care. (Hibbard, Stockard, Mahoney, & Tusler, 2004).

1. Believing the patient role is important
2. Having the confidence, knowledge, and other resource necessary to take action
3. Actually taking action to maintain and improve one's health
4. Staying the course even under stress

## Patient Engagement – An NAQC Priority

Recognizing the primary importance of *relationships* between engaged patients and families and their providers of care, NAQC has established **Guiding Principles for Patient Engagement**:

1. There must be a dynamic partnership among patients, their families, and the providers of their health care, which at the same time respects the boundaries of privacy, competent decision making, and ethical behavior.
2. This relationship is grounded in confidentiality, where the patient defines the scope of the confidentiality. Patients are the best and ultimate source of information about their health status and retain the right to make their own decisions about care.
3. In this relationship, there are mutual responsibilities and accountabilities among the patient, the family, and the provider that make it effective.
4. Providers must recognize that the extent to which patients and family members are able to engage or choose to engage may vary greatly based on individual circumstances. Advocacy for patients who are unable to participate fully is a fundamental nursing role.
5. All encounters and transactions with the patient and family occur while respecting the boundaries that protect recipients of care as well as providers of that care.
6. Patient advocacy is the demonstration of how all of the components of the relationship fit together.
7. This relationship is grounded in an appreciation of patient's rights and expands on the rights to include mutuality.
8. Mutuality includes sharing of information, creation of consensus, and shared decision making.
9. Health care literacy is essential for patient, family, and provider to understand the components of patient engagement. Providers must maintain awareness of the health care literacy level of the patient and family and respond accordingly. Acknowledgment and appreciation of diverse backgrounds is an essential part of the engagement process.

## Future NAQC Patient Engagement Initiatives

- Develop national consensus based white paper describing nursing's contribution to fostering improved patient and family engagement in health care decision making.
- Develop and implement strategies to improve the knowledge and skills of nurses in patient engagement.
- Provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of information/knowledge on patient engagement and related topics (conferences, publishing, etc.).

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## NAQC Member Organizations



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