



July 29, 2014 ■ Issue 109

Empowering Patients as Partners in Healthcare

As healthcare becomes increasingly patient-centered, providers must engage their patients and empower them to become partners in their own care, according to a *Health Affairs* [blog post](#).

Patient engagement on a grand scale will be an uphill struggle, but not impossible. For one thing, there's widespread confusion on what constitutes engagement. There also are issues relating to health literacy, flaws in the healthcare system's infrastructure and a care model that discourages patients and clinicians from voicing concerns for fear of seeming difficult.

In addition to universal problems, there are obstacles at the system level on the culture of disrespect among medical professionals, which also prevents them from fostering good patient relationships.

Healthcare organizations must take steps to actively involve patients in the care process. For example, they should provide open access to clinical records, implement open hospital visitation policies and encourage patients and their families to participate in initiatives like quality and safety and quality improvement activities.

"Including patients and families in quality improvement and in the design of care processes will healthcare providers important perspectives and spark ideas that may be different from their own knowledge.

For more tools and resources on fostering patient and family engagement, visit the Partnership for Patients Web site.

Fist-bumps, High-fives more Hygienic than Handshakes

A new [study](#) in the *American Journal of Infection Control* provides more evidence that fist-bumps are a more hygienic alternative to handshakes or high-fives in a healthcare setting.

According to the study, the infectious potential of three greeting methods--handshakes, high-fives and fist-bumps--with a glove dipped in a bacterial broth, found the highest bacterial transfer during the handshake. The transfer level fell by more than half for a high-five and by a full 90 percent for a fist-bump.

To account for the typically longer duration of a handshake than the other greetings, the researchers repeated the trials, prolonging each option for three seconds. This minimally affected the risk of transfer for high-fives, but significantly increased the risk for fist-bumps, according to the study. Similarly, researchers found bacterial transfer risk increased with grip pressure.

Save the Date

Please note: While the information below is a list of planned programs for 2014, at this time not all programs can be accessed online for registration.

Sept. 18 Adverse Drug Events

Sept. 22 Annual Leadership Summit

Sept. 29 Geriatric Emergency Department Guidelines

[Click here to register.](#)

CA53073014