Today’s most successful hospitals have evolved to be patient focused and service oriented, where branding, comfort and convenience are second only to clinical outcome.

This evolution, driven by the Affordable Care Act tying reimbursements to patient experience, has resulted in an emphasis on wellness – engaging patients and avoiding hospitalization.

Despite research showing that patient experience remains a top priority for successful organizations³, delivering a positive experience is not easy. In fact, many hospital executives feel that improving patient experience is marketing’s largest challenge.

Underscoring why delivering a positive patient experience is critical, Press Ganey reports that “hospitals that perform well on Patient Experience measures also have lower 30-day readmission rates”. These hospitals are least likely to receive a penalty and this has a dramatic impact on overall operating performance.²

As hospital administrators are painfully aware these readmission penalties can be stiff. Starting this October 2,592 hospitals will receive lower payments (a
combined $420M) for every Medicare patient that stays in the hospital – readmitted or not.¹

Patient Engagement is considered a top-3 priority of 84% of Healthcare Leaders and hospitals struggling with high 30-day readmissions rates are looking at their Patient Experience Scores for clues.

What challenges are hospitals facing?

Nearly one in five Medicare patients discharged from the hospital are readmitted within 30 days, with 50% to 75% of these found to be avoidable.

There are many challenges associated patient engagement and reducing readmission rates.

- A general lack of communication with the health system or physicians.
- Patients lack understanding of their health condition – not being engaged at time of discharge.
- 36% of patients do not get lab tests, specialist referrals or the follow up care they need.⁴
- Patients do not have easy access to health education and follow up instructions.
- Many do not know where to go for the necessary follow-up care.

How mobile apps can improve the patient and visitor experience

The answer to these challenges may already be in your patients’ pockets. Today 74% of US adults own a smartphone⁴ and forward thinking systems are using hospital branded apps to connect with patients and provide continuing service beyond the hospital walls.

A hospital branded mobile app provides information to patients before, during and after their stay. It gives easy access to health education and teaching tools to help patients understand their diagnosis. Patients also have direct access to their physicians, ways to manage their appointments after discharge, and reminders and alerts to ensure they arrive on time and prepared.

However, just having a branded app isn’t enough – visitors also need a compelling reason to install the app in the first place. That reason is interactive wayfinding – the promise of never being lost again. Research indicates that stress associated with poor wayfinding has far-reaching implications when that stress is attributed to all aspects of the visit. Hand-holding visitors from their home to parking and all the way to their appointment makes the difference.

A hospital branded mobile app with interactive wayfinding drives patient engagement, giving patients access to information they have come to expect. It provides the guidance needed to receive the necessary follow up care. The end result is a reduction in overall readmission rates, happier patients and more profitable hospitals.

2. Press Ganey, 2012
3. Beryl Institute, 2015

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