

# Patient Engagement Project (PEP) Celebrates Independence

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** After acute care treatment for life changing diagnoses such as stroke or spinal cord injury, patients seek to achieve the quality of life they had before injury at an acute rehabilitation hospital. In order for this rehabilitation process to be most effective, it is critical that the patient participate actively in deciding the course of treatment.

**Objective:** The Patient Engagement Project (PEP) is a multidisciplinary care initiative created to foster patients' independence in their activities of daily living. It was created to insure patients are involved in setting their weekly goals and have many opportunities to work toward them during therapy and between therapy sessions.

**Method:** This program includes care givers, hospital staff, family members, and friends in the encouragement of the patients to perform functional activities throughout the day so that new skills are integrated into everyday life. Weekly goals are discussed with patient and/or family and then the interdisciplinary team, and then posted in the patient's room. Therapists conduct brief weekly PEP rounds with nurses to review goals and the functional status for each patient.

**Nurses' Role in Project:** Nurses play an exceptional role in this project by promoting the engagement of patients in their own care.

In conjunction with the multidisciplinary team, the nurses and patients create a goal they seek to achieve during that week of their inpatient stay.

Achievement of this objective is evaluated daily and reformulated at the next weekly patient care conference.

Identifying what is important to that patient helps focus care on goals that have meaning to and will make a difference for that patient.



## Major Challenges

Initial goals set by patients may not be realistic and or achievable

Patient goals may not be consistent with the short and long-term goals the therapists and nurses have set.

Patients may not have new goals every week.

Patient unable (cognitively) or unwilling (behaviorally) to participate

Patient's unstable medical status prevents progress toward goals.

Patients continue with goals during therapy but do not follow through outside of therapy setting.

Some nurses and therapists avoid speaking to patients about their goals because they do not have the high-level communication skills to listen and acknowledge the patient's perspective and then transform what appears to be an unrealistic goal into a short-term goal to which both parties can agree.

Accurate and timely communication between caregivers, regarding changes in patient functional status became more critical in order to promote patient independence while maintaining safety during the performance of new tasks. Differences in how various staff members assisted patients could lead to unsafe situations.

## Measures of Success

Measures of success include:

- Increase in documented functional activities on the nursing unit
- Improve patient/family satisfaction as measured by the Press Ganey (PG) survey questions:
  - Extent to which you were involved in setting your PT goals
  - Extent to which you were involved in setting your OT goals
  - How well the nurses kept you informed about your treatment and progress
  - How well staff worked together to care for you
- Improvement on the culture of safety survey score from 2013 to 2014, for the statement, "Hospital units work well together to provide the best care for patients"

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## Innovations & Interventions

Patients apply new skills outside of therapy which in turn improves their proficiency with the tasks.

Patient repetition helps to remodel the brain and improve function.

Nurses promote the engagement of patients with their own care and follow up regularly to see if goals have been met.

Nurses began training program in "Crucial Conversations." This approach facilitates communication between staff and patients in challenging scenarios such as setting realistic and achievable goals.

Nurse leaders utilize multiple venues to teach critical thinking skills and to assist nurses in working through the challenges of setting goals.

Nurses expand the use of whiteboards in patient rooms to reflect improvements in patient function and to communicate exactly what the patient should or should not do in the room.

## Results

As of July 2014, the percentage of patients with documented PEP activities was 53%.

Scores for the PG question related to "setting own PT goals" increased 4.3 points in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2014.

Scores for the PG question related to "involvement in setting OT goals" increased 3.1 points during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2014.

Scores for the PG questions "how well did nurses keep you informed of your treatment and progress" decreased 0.6 points in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2014.

Scores for the PG question "how well staff worked together to care for you" decreased 1.5 points from 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2014 to 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2014.

On the culture of safety survey, the statement "hospital units work well together to provide the best care for patients" improved from 80% positive to 82% positive. (The 2014 mean for reporting hospitals was 68%)

