Patient Journey Mapping

Patient Journey Mapping (PJM) is an effective way to bring patients and providers together to understand the patient experience and quickly identify areas for improvement. This patient-centered approach can be used to evaluate a single process, or to highlight system-wide issues and inform strategic planning.

PJM allows the team to focus on how the care is received by the patient and caregivers, which differs from process mapping, which typically maps out how care is delivered from the provider’s perspective. PJM is especially effective for evaluating transitions as the patient and their caregivers are the only true generalists in the system and the only ones who experience both sides of the transfer.

In PJM, patients and providers review a specific patient journey. The working group will include approximately three patients and representatives from all provider groups that interact with the patient during the journey being mapped.

Step One – Creating the Map

Over the morning of a day-long, facilitated session, the team captures the journey of patients who transitioned from X to Y. The goal is to for the group to create a visual representation of each step actually taken by the patient over their journey from X to Y. The end result is a powerful visual representation of time delays, complexities and frustrations within the system, from the perspective of the patient.

Step Two – Analyzing the Map

The second half of a PJM session is spent reviewing the map to identify where the journey could be improved. The process often results in new and unexpected learnings, reflections, insights, and ideas for improving the experience of care for the patient. Patients and providers will also work together to generate ideas on how the system and journey could be improved.

Throughout the process, the events, exceptions, concerns and frustrations that do not fit on the map itself are recorded. These can be such things as the financial burdens of seeking treatment, frustrations with transportation or other concerns.

Part of the mapping process may focus on what should happen in an ideal state so that the team can begin to generate ideas around making improvements.

It is recommended that after the map is produced that it is shared with additional care providers, patients and caregivers. Their perspectives and experience can both ensure the map is representative and illuminate any other exceptions.