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**TITLE: Seminal Study Finds that Patients and Family Caregivers Desire Clear Accountability, Care Continuity, and Caring Attitudes in Care Transitions**

Despite the intensity of efforts launched in the past decade to understand how to reduce unnecessary healthcare utilization, reduce hospital readmissions and improve patient experience, patients and their family members still experience suboptimal transitions from hospital to home (i.e., care transitions). Importantly, little is known about what patients and their family caregivers actually experience and desire from this process.

In order to improve patient and family caregiver experiences and outcomes associated with care transitions, Project ACHIEVE (5-year, $15 million PCORI\*-funded study) is comprehensively analyzing this process at >40 hospital sites nationwide. Led by Dr. Mark V. Williams at the University of Kentucky, Project ACHIEVE is rigorously evaluating care transition strategies at participating hospital sites. In its first phase, Dr. Suzanne Mitchell at the Boston Medical Center guided the research team in qualitative research focused on determining what experiences and outcomes matter most to patients and family caregivers.

Results from focus groups and interviews conducted with 138 patients and 110 family caregivers from California, Colorado, Kentucky, Louisiana, New England, and Pennsylvania are being published in the May/June edition of the *Annals of Family Medicine* (“Experiencing Care Transitions from the Patient and Caregiver Perspective”). Specifically, the researchers sought to identify the care transition outcomes that were most important to patients and their family caregivers, as well as the processes of care linked to these outcomes.

*What do patients and family caregivers want during transitions in care?*

Patients and family caregivers identified three chief outcomes that they desired when undergoing a transition from hospital to home or other care setting:

1. to feel prepared and capable of implementing care plans,
2. unambiguous accountability from the healthcare system, and
3. to feel cared for and cared about by medical providers.

*How can providers help patients and their families achieve the outcomes they desire most?*

Interviews revealed five care transition services or provider behaviors that were linked to achieving the outcomes that patients and their family caregivers identified as most important:

1. providing actionable information;
2. collaborative discharge planning;
3. using empathic language and gestures;
4. anticipating the patient’s needs to support self-care at home, and
5. providing uninterrupted care with minimal handoffs.

Findings from this initial phase of the study reveal that accountability, continuity in care and caring attitudes from the medical staff are important components of care transitions for patients and their family caregivers. When they experience these components, patients and caregivers perceive their care as excellent. However, when they are not experienced, patients and caregivers may feel unsafe and abandoned.

If you have questions, please contact the Project ACHIEVE Team at achieve@uky.edu.

\* Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is an independent, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization with a mission of helping people make informed healthcare decisions and improving healthcare outcomes by producing high-integrity, evidence-based research findings guided by patients, caregivers, and the broader healthcare community.

Read the article in full here: http://www.annfammed.org/content/16/3/225.