

# Patient Satisfaction Survey

Work together as a high performance team and **have satisfied patients.**

**Unless you ask about your service, you will not know what the practice does well and what it needs to improve.** In the absence of information about how patients view the practice, decisions affecting productivity, morale and turnover are made in an information vacuum.

Most people like their health care professionals. However, the whole team influences whether the quality of service satisfies patients. Any team member can help the practice's reputation, but they can hurt it also, often unintentionally.

In the worst case, disgruntled patients tell everybody except those at the practice about their experience. They will talk about the negative experience to at least 20 people.

Patients who really like the practice will tell about eight others.

***Most staff members do not have the time, energy, resources or training to develop and analyse patient satisfaction surveys.***

***Make sure you diagnose the problems in your practice before you try to cure them.***

***Patients are more likely to answer honestly to an outside independent party.***

#### **DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM**

- Are there problems that regularly appear in your practice, ones that seem endemic?
- How many schemes have been tried to fix the practice's perceived weaknesses or address patient complaints?
- Before you attempt to treat the problem, make sure you take time to diagnose correctly the disease.

Get an accurate assessment of the practice's strengths, leadership, objectives, policies, and procedures from the patient's point-of-view.

The Patient Satisfaction Survey is

- Anonymous
- Confidential
- Australian
- Research-based

#### **WHAT IS A PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY?**

The Survey combines quantitative and qualitative data that tells you where the strengths and weaknesses of your practice lie from the patient's point of view. It helps to provide a snapshot that says "this is what we think of you".

By analysing the results of the Survey, we make recommendations about ways to address problems and build on strengths that are revealed.

The Survey identifies two patterns in a practice. First, it shows ratings by respondents in target areas. As such, it shows where the practice is done well and where it needs to improve. Second, it shows how target areas relate to each other. The structure of the variable set shows how specific areas impinge on each other and therefore how changing one will influence other areas.

The survey serves to review strategy, redefine purpose, solidify direction and helps practices become high performance workplaces. The survey functions as part of the process of practice and staff development in order to strengthen its position in the marketplace.

## WHAT QUESTIONS ARE ASKED?

- Based on a national study, we have learned that 16 well-focused questions provide sufficient information to effectively assess the quality of service that a practice provides.
- The Patient Satisfaction Survey asks about the staff, reception area, interaction with the doctor, fees and waiting time.
- It asks whether the patient would recommend the practice to others and whether there has ever been an incident in which the practice disappointed the patient.
- It also asks for an overall rating of the practice in terms of satisfaction.
- Finally it asks for recommendations on what changes would improve the service of the practice.
- This takes the guesswork out of the process, builds on established norms and provides a precise set of recommendations.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

- *To get a representative sample, we need at least 50 randomly selected patients per practice with an additional 25 surveys per additional principal.*

## FEEDBACK BENEFITS

- **Benchmark the practice's performance over time.** Good information allows the practice to set targets for improvement. It signals when deviations occur.
- **Demonstrate the practice's commitment to its patients' opinions.** Seeking feedback from the patient shows you want to learn from your patients. It signals that the practice is patient-oriented.
- **Develop staff competencies.** You will pinpoint the areas that require improvement. You can develop a well-focused program that matches staff skills with patient needs. You get more motivated and productive team members.
- **Enhance the practice's reputation and position in the marketplace.** By acting on feedback, you dramatically show a confidence that sets your practice apart from others. It creates positive impressions that can improve the number of referrals.
- **Understand the patients' opinions and health attitudes.** It indicates whether patients perceive their health to be good, whether they take care in looking after their health, and whether they can talk to their doctor about anything.
- **Provide recommendations for policy change.** By identifying when change is needed and what changes are required.
- **Discover what your patients really think about the practice's service and staff.** The patients are asked to assess the principals as well as office and clinical staff.

## HOW IS THE SURVEY DONE?

- The survey takes each patient about 2 – 5 minutes to complete.
- Your practice manager or receptionist is given a pack that includes instructions, survey forms and a collection envelope to return the surveys.
- Patients answer the survey anonymously.
- Patients return the survey to the receptionist in a sealed envelope.
- The survey data comes to the Norton Consulting Group.
- A report with recommendations is prepared and available after two weeks.

## WHY ANONYMITY?

- Patients are more open and honest if they know the survey does not record their name.
- Patients are more inclined to give useful feedback.
- Patients also trust a survey undertaken by an independent third party.

**PATIENT SATISFACTION  
CONTRIBUTES TO HIGH  
PERFORMANCE  
PRACTICES WHERE  
PEOPLE RESPECT EACH  
OTHER, VALUE THE  
WORK THEY DO, HOW  
THEY TREAT PATIENTS  
AND CELEBRATE HOW  
THEY DO IT.**

## NCG – EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Norton Consulting has an extensive 30-year background in healthcare specialising in communication, management and learning within the healthcare context. We have helped a wide range of practices conduct patient satisfaction surveys. We also have expertise in conducting practice assessments and audits for general medical, specialist medical, physiotherapy and dental practices and clinics. This process includes an evaluation of the practice's overall effectiveness in the areas of communication, education, marketing, strategic planning, financial planning, systems analysis and patient flow.

**[WWW.OURPACTICETOOLS.COM](http://WWW.OURPACTICETOOLS.COM)**

Also check out our extensive range of products to help improve productivity in your practice including procedures manuals, stocktaking programs, telephone guides and conflict resolution guides.

**Norton Consulting Group  
PO Box 603  
Paddington Q 4064**

**T: 07 3876 3166  
F: 07 3369 8394  
E: [info@nortonconsultinggroup.com](mailto:info@nortonconsultinggroup.com)  
W: [www.nortonconsultinggroup.com](http://www.nortonconsultinggroup.com)**