

## How to Achieve and Maintain HCAHPS Success

Griffin Hospital, Derby, Connecticut

It's not enough to be a top-performing hospital for HCAHPS—to maintain that success, you've got to know *exactly* what brought you to the top. Knowing precisely how that success was achieved bestows a roadmap to continued success. Griffin Hospital is one of the top performing hospitals for HCAHPS in the nation, and they know how they got there and how to stay there. We conducted an in-depth interview with Bill Powanda, Vice President of Griffin Hospital, to discover how they have achieved such resounding success with HCAHPS.

### Griffin Hospital's HCAHPS Performance

Below is a sample of the HCAHPS survey items where Griffin Hospital scores at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile rank.

### HealthStream Research

HealthStream Research is a national leader in the measurement of physician, employee, patient, and community satisfaction for healthcare organizations. We currently work with more than 1,100 facilities nationwide, including many of the nation's largest for-profit and not-for-profit health systems and specialty healthcare companies.

<u>HCAHPS Survey Item</u>	<u>HealthStream Research Percentile Rank</u>
Would you recommend this hospital to your friends and family?	99 <sup>th</sup>
During this hospital stay, how often did nurses listen carefully to you?	99 <sup>th</sup>
During this hospital stay, how often were your room and bathroom kept clean?	99 <sup>th</sup>
How often did you get help in getting to the bathroom or in using a bedpan as soon as you wanted?	95 <sup>th</sup>
During this hospital stay, how often was your pain well controlled?	95 <sup>th</sup>
During this hospital stay, how often did nurses treat you with courtesy and respect?	93 <sup>rd</sup>
During this hospital stay, how often did doctors explain things in a way you could understand?	93 <sup>rd</sup>
Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst possible and 10 is the best hospital possible, what number would you use to rate this hospital?	93 <sup>rd</sup>

## Griffin Hospital's Roadmap to HCAHPS Success

- **Becoming a Patient-Centered Hospital—The Journey Began with Planetree**

Griffin Hospital adopted the Planetree patient-centered model of care hospital-wide in 1992, becoming the first member of the Planetree Network of member hospitals, now some 125 strong. Griffin committed to personalizing, humanizing, and demystifying the healthcare experience and to creating a healing environment that meets consumer expectations. The journey has resulted in Griffin achieving national recognition for providing an exceptional hospital experience that includes industry leading patient satisfaction ratings, superior clinical outcomes, and as the hospital and employer of choice for the community it serves. Today, Griffin Health Services Corporation, the parent of Griffin Hospital, is also the parent of the non-profit subsidiary corporation Planetree.
- **Don't Wait on CMS—Be Proactive**

Griffin Hospital began participation well before “pay for performance” came about. With this head start, Griffin was already experienced and ready when HCAHPS was made mandatory. If you wait on CMS (such as for future developments of CAHPS initiatives for other service lines—outpatients, for example), then your learning curve won't peak until *after* public reporting begins, while those who are proactive will be veterans *before* public reporting begins.
- **The Entire Hospital Experience Affects Scores**

It doesn't matter if you have the shortest ED wait times around and deliver the greatest care in the nation—if parking is a nightmare, for example, your patients won't be completely satisfied. Everything that happens to the patient—from the time their car pulls in to the moment they are discharged and drive off—affects HCAHPS scores. “Griffin Hospital offers free valet parking, patient concierges to take people to where they need to go (not just telling them where to go), regularly scheduled arts and entertainment including musicians, craft therapy, and more,” said Bill Powanda. “These all support the *complete* patient experience.”
- **Empower the Patient**

Griffin lets patients review their own charts, and they are given full explanations for what will take place, at what time, and in what order. *Not* knowing what is going to happen is very frustrating to patients, but giving them complete information will create very satisfied patients.
- **Empower the Employees**

Scores are shared with total transparency. All results are posted on a monthly basis. Sharing scores also leads to increased employee buy-in. “Once the nurses saw their scores related to nurse to patient communications they immediately implemented a number of changes including scheduled rounding. Our HCAHPS scores on related items improved by the next reporting cycle,” said Powanda.
- **Put Extra Focus on Main Points of Patient Contact**

Griffin recognized that interns and residents were perceived as the primary contacts for patients. Griffin created communication inservices specifically for these groups. HCAHPS scores immediately improved.
- **Build a Quality and Safety Culture From Scratch**

Griffin Hospital eliminated all existing committees and structures and configured a new operating division, the Patient Safety and Care Improvement Division. The new division merged the

functions of the Quality and Risk Management Departments, Infection Control, Case Management, and Medical Records.

- **Set the Bar High**

Griffin Hospital sets targets using a Secured Customer model. A Secured Customer is one that gives a top box score to all three of the following items: *Overall Satisfaction*, *Willingness to Recommend*, and *Willingness to Return*. Griffin Hospital sets aggressive targets for the percentage of patients that fall into the Secured Customer parameters.

### **Bringing It All Together**

Griffin Hospital's approach to HCAHPS shows that the best way to achieve and maintain HCAHPS success is to build *everything* around the patient experience. The reason why success requires a patient-centered approach is that it only takes a single unpleasant or frustrating experience to negatively affect the perception of the overall hospital experience. Griffin Hospital succeeds because everything they do, from organizational structure to parking, is designed from the perspective of creating *completely* satisfied patients.