



## **Sustained HCAHPS Improvement at Loma Linda Rooted in Planetree Patient-Centered Values**

"Our values should be at the heart of everything we do," this was the vision that Jesse Mock, Vice President for Patient Engagement at Loma Linda University Medical Center, had in mind when LLUMC joined Planetree in 2007. "I see partnering with Planetree as an opportunity to return to our roots and affirm our core values: compassion, integrity, excellence, teamwork and wholeness. Planetree's 10 components of patient-centered care are in direct alignment with Loma Linda's motto "to make man whole."

For more than a century, LLUMC's pioneering leaders have developed faithful, innovative approaches to health care for the whole person. Pure air, sunlight, moderation in lifestyle, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, and trust in divine power were foundational to Loma Linda's first foray into providing health care and education. The success of the past provided a base for expanding the vision of integrated health care to include an experience that supports and enhances healing. The deep roots of LLUMC's patient-centered values have created a strong foundation from which LLUMC continues to thrive.

The strategy of hard-wiring a culture of patient-centered values within LLUMC takes constant and deliberate attention. At LLUMC it is part of the strategic plan. Part of that plan takes shape over time through the practice of "SOARing"; which means, Selection of staff for values alignment, Orienting to the values, Appraising on the values, and Recognizing for living the values. Planetree affirms and reinforces the strategy during Planetree implementation and assists to drive meaningful and sustainable culture change. This type of sustained improvement is evident in the LLUMC HCAHPS scores since joining Planetree. Increasing emphasis on achievement, improvement, and consistency in the eight HCAHPS composite areas, which impact 30% of a hospital's Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) score has improved over the outcomes reporting period.

This pay-for-performance approach, established as part of the Affordable Care Act, incentivizes hospitals based on how well they perform or improve on Process of Care, HCAHPS, and Outcome measures. For some hospitals this increased emphasis on scores, tied to financial incentives, creates pressure for quality improvement teams to become score chasers, where the focus is on targeting a better score, rather than a deep dive into systemic culture change. Planetree's central tenet to be person-centered is lost when the focus is solely on a number as a goal. Human interactions are at the core of most measures, including HCAHPS - "We are human beings, caring for other human beings."

Caring for patients and each other is a century-old value and practice at LLUMC and, is a continued focus as a key component of its quality improvement efforts. Since joining Planetree in 2007, LLUMC has seen an increase in every HCAHPS domain. While the increase in scores may appear linear on the surface, LLUMC acknowledges that there was a learning curve as patient-centered processes became engrained in our culture; something that other healthcare organizations working on the deep systemic culture change needed to develop and implement patient-centered care can relate to. The increase is important and something to celebrate, however, this is just a milestone on the never-ending journey. LLUMC's goal is to continue to improve the patient experience in every domain. Pausing to celebrate incremental changes is an important aspect of caring for the caregiver. Human relationships are at the heart of the changes in patient satisfaction scores over time and LLUMC credits staff for making it happen.

LLUMC leaders are encouraged by these outcome measurements of the patient experience and are pleased with the partnership and support of Planetree. "Our goal for Planetree in the future at LLUMC is to Personalize, Humanize, and Demystify the patient experience through a focused and deliberate enhancing of our model of care design with Planetree guidance, which will drive the planning process for new facilities and the delivery of services in the organization" says Mr. Mock.