



Understanding the Distinction between Patients Vs. Customers In HIV Primary Care

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Together We Care

Learning Objectives

- Understanding why it is important to address customer services
- How the social drivers of health compounded with patient treatment impact retention in care
- Understanding the characteristics of services
- How to navigate between patient's expectations and patient's needs



Community Health Center Association of Mississippi (CHCAMS)

- The **Community Health Center Association of Mississippi** (formerly the Mississippi Primary Health Care Association) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership organization comprised of 21 Community Health Centers operating in Mississippi and providing quality comprehensive healthcare in accredited medical homes.
- We provide support through training and technical assistance (T/TA) to all the Federal Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Look-a-likes in the state of Mississippi.



Why do we have to
address customer
service?

Why does it Matter?

- The healthcare market is competitive.
- Patients have choices.
- Patients evaluate the entire experience.
- Have you or a family member ever made the decision to switch healthcare providers? Why?





The lifeblood of FQHCs

- Patients are the lifeblood of FQHCs
- Without patients there will be no industry
- Each FQHC is responsible for a unique number of unduplicated patients annually
- There are potential consequences when the unduplicated patient numbers are not met

A wooden figure is positioned at the bottom center of the frame, holding a light gray speech bubble with a black outline. Inside the speech bubble is a large black question mark. The background is a solid, muted yellow-green color.

Who are your Customers
(Patients)


Definition of Customer

- The definition of a “customer” is a person or entity that obtains a service or product from another person or entity in exchange for money. Customers can buy either goods or services.
- Health care is classified by the government as a service industry because it provides an intangible thing rather than an actual thing.



Patients Should not be Consider Customers

- 1. Patients are not on vacation.** They are not in the mindset that they are sitting in the doctor's office or the hospital to have a good time. They are not relaxed; they have not left their troubles temporarily behind them. They are not in the mood to be happy. They would rather not be requiring the service they are requesting.
- 2. Patients have not chosen to buy the service.** Patients have been forced to seek the service, in most cases.
- 3. Patients are not paying for the service.** At least not directly. And they have no idea what the price is anyway.
- 4. Patients are not buying a product from which they can demand a positive outcome.** Sometimes the result of the service is still illness and/or death. This does not mean the service provided was not a good one.
- 5. The patient is not always right.** A patient cannot, or should not, go to a doctor demanding certain things. They should demand good care, but that care might mean denying the patient what the patient thinks he or she needs. The doctor is not a servant; they do not have to do everything the patient wants. They are obligated to do everything the patient needs.
- 6. Patient satisfaction does not always correlate with the quality of the product.** A patient who is given antibiotics for a cold is very satisfied but has gotten poor-quality care.

The image features a white background with several abstract geometric elements. On the left, there are two vertical orange dashed lines, a grey square outline, and a curved orange dashed line. In the upper left, there is a large solid orange circle. At the top center, a grey triangle is partially visible. In the top right, a portion of a solid orange circle is shown. A large green semi-circle occupies the right side of the image, containing the text.

Can FQHCs Use
Customer Service
Principles?

<https://youtu.be/4M0ooFIJmfk>



The Front Desk is the Key

- Customers Service
- Standards in Practice
- Phone Techniques
- Handling Complaints
- Confidentiality and Privacy



Bad Customer Service



LIST FIVE TO EIGHT EXCUSES YOU HEAR
STAFF STATE WHEN THEY HAVE GIVEN
BAD CUSTOMER SERVICE.



THINK OF A WAY TO COUNTER THOSE
EXCUSES.





Customer Service

- Customer's Perception of service you provide
 - Positive first impression
 - Reflect the image of the business
- 

Factors That Make Up Customer Service

- Reliability
- Responsiveness
- Competence
- Access
- Courtesy
- Communication

- Credibility
- Security
- Understanding
- Tangibles
- Focus
- Quality

Unique characteristics of services

Characteristics	Description
1) Intangibility	Service products cannot be tasted, felt, seen, heard, or smelled. Prior to a medical visit, patients have nothing but an appointment time and a promise of quality services. To reduce uncertainty caused by service intangibility, patients look for tangible evidence that will provide information and confidence about the services.
2) Inseparability	In health care, the service cannot be provided without the patient being present. If the staff or provider, gives poor inattentive services, the patient will not be satisfied with their visit. In the same way, other patients in the waiting room can impact another's experience.
3) Heterogeneity	Service delivery quality depends on who provides the services. The same employee can deliver differing levels of service, displaying a marked difference in tolerance and friendliness as the day wears on. Lack of consistency is a major factor in patient dissatisfaction.
4) Perishability	Service cannot be stored. Empty waiting rooms and exam rooms, cannot be provided on another day. If services are to maximize revenue and patient outcomes, they must manage capacity and demand since they cannot carry forward unsold inventory.



Patient Expectations

Need to meet patients' expectations in order for them to be satisfied.

Health care workers are responsible for patient satisfaction.

What is the cost of an unhappy patient?



How to Handle a Complaint

- If possible, sit at eye level with the patient.
- Take notes on what the patient says.
- Ask questions to clarify but Do Not be defensive
- Try to understand the problem from the patient's point of view.
- Thank the patient



Facts about Customer Satisfaction



A good experience is told to 8 people, and a bad experience to 22!



7 out of 10 patients who change providers do so because of poor service or indifference toward them.



Satisfying and retaining current patients is 3-10 times cheaper than attracting new patients



70% of complaining patients will return if you resolve the complaint in their favor.



What should Healthcare Workers Do?

- Smile when appropriate.
- ALWAYS speak warmly and courteously.
- Use professional language-and use the patient's name.
- NEVER tell patients your personal problems and be careful about giving any personal information.
- Focus on the patient's needs.



Seek Resolution



IF YOU ARE THE PROBLEM-
APOLOGIZE AND THANK THE PATIENT
FOR HIS/HER FEEDBACK.



IF YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION,
LET THE PATIENT KNOW YOU'LL GET
BACK TO HIM/HER.



PROVIDE INFORMATION THE PATIENT
MIGHT BE LACKING. (WITHOUT
DEFENDING.)



TRYING TO FIND A RESOLUTION TO
THE SATISFACTION OF THE PATIENT.

Service Recovery

Service recovery involves the service provider taking responsive action to “recover” lost or dissatisfied customers, alter their negative perceptions, convert them into satisfied customers, and ultimately maintain a business relationship with them.



Service Recovery

- What to do?
- Own up to the mistake
- Make it right-by:
 - Apologizing profusely
 - Fixing what you can fix
 - When possible, by providing a reasonable compensation



Social Drivers of Health for HIV



Impact of SDH on HIV

- federal poverty status
- education level
- median household income
- health insurance coverage



Why does the distinction between Customers and Patients Matter for HIV Primary Care?



Reduce barriers to HIV Primary care for your patients

- HIV Stigma
- Avoiding pushing patients into trails
- Identifying personal and social barriers that may impact your patient's care
- Listening to patients' complaints about medication adherence



Build positive relationships with your patients

- Help patients modify behaviors that lead to poor retention in HIV care
- Foster patient trust
- Allow open communication and collaborative decision-making
- Demonstrate interest in addressing barriers to care, including structural barriers, from the first interaction



Customer Service for all Patients

- If you follow the rules for providing excellent customer service for your patients, and you respect your patients' rights, is there a need to have special strategies for caring for the very young, the very old, or economically disadvantaged patients?



Remember

- Poor service sheds light on deeper issues
- Follow-up and follow-through on patient feedback
- Happy patients return- and refer others
- Be courteous and respectful, not indifferent or combative
- Be accessible in a technological world
- Deliver end-to-end service



Thank You



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