



MAPS May 18th Community Advisory Council Summary

By Grace Martin, Founder of Lexington Writing Firm

On May 18, Minnesota Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS) hosted a statewide forum for patient/resident and family advisors serving in health systems. Believing that patient, resident, and family input is critical to safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, MAPS launched this innovative Council for virtually sharing concerns, perspectives, and insights.

Catherine Hinz (Executive Director), Lisa Juliar (Engagement Specialist/Patient Partner), and Megan Daman (Project Manager) led the meeting, which included nearly 40 energetic patients, residents, family members, and healthcare leaders.

Bill Adam's story: An involved patient advocate specializing in rural health, Bill Adams shared his insights at the beginning of the meeting. "I had been involved in healthcare policy work. After a heart attack, that policy work became very personal," he explained. "The most important aspect of my work is bringing the patient voice to the table and asking, 'Is this good for the patient?'"

"One of the concerns I've had during this pandemic," detailed Bill, "is that it has become harder for patients' and families' voices to be at the table during important discussions."

Pre-Council survey results: Before the May 18 Council meeting, participants described their top safety concerns related to COVID-19. Similar to the previous week's survey, the results showed that the central concern is for healthcare workers' safety and emotional wellbeing. Other concerns include safety for special patient/resident populations, the impact of visitor restrictions on safety, availability of care in rural areas during COVID-19, and behavioral health.

Council poll results: During the discussion, attendees were asked to select what they believe to be the priority that this Council should focus on. The results include responses from Council members, as well as healthcare leaders:

- Safe care during visitor restrictions (13/35 votes)
- Patient/family-facing communications regarding safety precautions organizations (14/35 votes)
- Safety for special or unique populations (8/35 votes)

Open discussion: MAPS welcomed patients/residents and family members thoughts and stories. The Council hopes to see more discussion about:

- The differences between "caregiver/care partner" and a "visitor"
- How to make visitor guidelines more consistent and clear to prevent fear and confusion
- The caregiver/care partner's role for patients/residents with special or unique needs
- Emotional support for those who are not able to see their loved ones

Key takeaways for health systems: With immense respect for healthcare leaders—and an understanding that this pandemic is a multifaceted health crisis—the advisors hope that health systems continue to acknowledge the vital importance of patient and resident's personal caregivers/partners. Additionally, they hope to see increased opportunities to partner for safety and communicate with these essential members of the care team.

For more information about the MAPS Community Advisory Council weekly conversations, email info@mnpatientsafety.org.