



June 8 Community Advisory Council Summary

By Grace Martin, Founder of Lexington Writing Firm

On June 8, the 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 focused on discussing the role of a “care partner” in promoting patient safety.

In an effort to elevate patient, resident, and family perspectives and experiences, the MAPS team encourages anyone with a story about safety during COVID-19 to contact chinz@mnpatientsafety.org. MAPS hopes to share and amplify patient stories.

Council input: Prior to the discussion, Council members answered several survey questions:

- 51% of respondents believe “care partner” is the most suitable term for this role
- 50% have delayed healthcare due to COVID-19, 42.8% have not, 7.1% did not respond
- On a scale of 1 to 5, 15 of the Council members ranked their feeling of safety in the current healthcare environment to be 2.5 (1: not safe, 5: extremely safe) compared to 3.9 prior to COVID-19.

The Council members also ranked the top safety reasons for having a “care partner” while receiving care:

- Filling in the information gaps when a patient/resident is unable to speak for themselves
- Advocating for a person’s needs
- Emotional support

Discussion of care person: The Council discussed how involving a “care partner” throughout care during COVID-19 can help increase safety. Bruce M. stated, “The care partner has so much to offer health professionals to improve care, to help them do their job better. In many ways, the care partner is indispensable to the process.” Darlene H. added, “The emotional wellbeing of the patient helps the physical wellbeing and healing. That is one reason why the care partner is so important.”

The Council also discussed the importance of culturally competent training for healthcare professionals around welcoming and involving diverse care partners at every step of care.

Key takeaways for health systems: The Council is now drafting a written document that details the role of the “care partner,” as well as the hallmarks of a safe environment that welcomes and incorporates this vital role. Please be aware of this document, which will help guide internal discussions as well as empower patients and families as to how they can best advocate for their loved ones.

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