



MAPS' Inaugural Community Advisory Council Summary

By Grace Martin, Founder of Lexington Writing Firm

On May 11, Minnesota Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS) hosted the first-ever, statewide forum for patient/resident and family advisors serving in health systems. Believing that patient, resident, and family input is critical to safety, MAPS launched this innovative Council for virtually sharing concerns, perspectives, and insights about COVID-19 in Minnesota.

Led by Catherine Hinz (Executive Director of MAPS) and Vonda Vaden Bates (CEO of 10th Dot and a patient advocate), along with other MAPS leaders, the meeting included 35 energetic participants.

Candy's story: A nurse and healthcare professional, Candy graciously shared how her mother passed away on April 5 in a transitional care unit during visitor restrictions. Due to memory challenges, Candy's mother did not understand why they could not come to her room during her last days, and Candy has not been able to visit her father in a senior community since her mother's death. "I understand the public health need and that this population is at-risk," she explained, "but it's just been extremely frustrating and hard to go through. We need to find better ways to do this."

Pre-council survey results: Before the May 11 Council meeting, participants described their top healthcare safety concerns related to COVID-19. The results showed a strong concern for healthcare workers' physical and mental wellbeing, as well as healthcare systems' safety and financial stability.

Other concerns included long-term planning for communities, preventing public complacency, equitable delivery of care, and helping those with special needs.

What's missing from the conversation? The discussion focused on issues believed to be missing from the conversation on safety during COVID-19. The Council hopes to see further discussion of:

- Evidence-based health impacts of social isolation and visitor restrictions
- Balancing physical and mental health during social isolation
- How to best care for oneself or a loved one if they contract COVID-19
- More extensive mapping of cases, drawing on other industries' best practices for mapping
- Clear information as to whether facilities have adequate PPE, other risk prevention measures
- More detailed information about the scope of testing at each healthcare system
- Information and clarity around elective surgeries: a more defined plan as to how elective surgeries will begin again, metrics guiding decision making, risk prevention strategies
- Addressing anxiety, increasing communication to parents and those with underlying conditions
- What is the *best/safest* way to go forward? (Instead of "How soon can we go back to normal?")

Key takeaways for health systems: Participating patient/resident and family advisors hope health systems can provide more detail about current safety measures, the metrics guiding decision making, and future planning.

Understanding that the COVID-19 pandemic is a complex and ever-changing situation, the advisors believe consistent, clear messaging will help curb misinformation and assuage anxiety.

For more information about the MAPS Community Advisory Council weekly conversations, email maps@mnpatientsafety.org. These weekly summaries will be posted each week on the [MAPS website](#).