



Patient and Employee Survey Results: **What To Do With the Results?**

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At Northwest Health Services we participate in doing patient surveys two times a year and employee surveys yearly. For a long time, survey results were typed up by our secretary and distributed to the providers. I'm sure they were looked at and then set aside and not given much more thought. The employees felt that filling out the surveys was a waste of time since no changes were made afterwards.

They talked, we listened! After the last employee surveys were completed and results reported, the senior leadership staff, consisting of the chief executive officer, chief operating officer, chief financial officer, medical director, and human resources director, got together to discuss some of the employees' concerns.

At our bi-annual All Staff Meeting held last January, those concerns and how they were being addressed were presented. For example, two of the survey items were: "I am paid fairly for the work I do," and "Pay raises are

satisfactory." Over 60% of employees disagreed with these statements.

After discussion, reviewing a wage comparison study and performance reviews, across-the-board raises were given, along with the promise of consistent annual evaluations and pay adjustments. Yes, staff were heard!

The patient surveys were tallied as usual. Instead of handing out the results to providers, Becky Hampton, Chief Operating Officer, invited the clinic managers to a Managers Meeting to discuss the survey results and how to "fix" the problems. Each manager was given the results from their own clinic, and had to pick out one problem to address and then write a plan using the Plan, Do, Study, Act model.

One clinic noticed that several patients had noted that the waiting room was dreary and depressing. The staff got together and developed a plan for brightening the room. They bought bright colored paint and spent a volunteer Saturday repainting. Old curtains were removed and new blinds hung. Old pictures and art work was replaced. Dog-eared magazines were thrown out and replaced with current ones. The chairs in the waiting room were rearranged. The glass that had separated patients from the reception staff was also removed.

Wow, what a difference at minimal cost! It looked like a brand new reception area! While not all clinics were able to do an easy fix like that, they all are working on projects that follow a planned and written PDSA.

Another area of dissatisfaction for several patients was they didn't feel some of the staff was as friendly or patient as they should be. This was a cause of great concern to senior leadership! After much consideration it was decided that as an organization we needed to conduct customer satisfaction training. The program called "The Customer" was chosen for the training. A small selection of the staff went through facilitator training. Every employee is now mandated to attend a customer training course facilitated by those who have been trained. The program consists of one 4-hour session, five 2-hour sessions and a graduation. We have taken this very seriously and implemented many steps to incorporate this into our improvement plan.

We distribute 50 surveys per provider. With 22 providers at 12 clinic sites, approximately 1,200 surveys are distributed to random patients twice a year. We feel the surveys are very beneficial to the organization and help us in improving patient and employee satisfaction and retention. ■