



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

19 May 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM/SG

FROM: HQ USAF/SG
1780 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

SUBJECT: Trusted Care – Patient Centeredness Vision

Activated, engaged patients who are partners in their health care are indispensable to maximizing value, promoting safe care and achieving Zero Harm. Activated patients are less likely to experience a medical error or suffer a consequence due to poor communication with their healthcare team. I'm continually impressed by Air Force medics of all backgrounds who personify Patient Centeredness daily. Patient Centeredness does not mean giving patients whatever they want. Rather, it is integral to the six aims of health care: safe, effective, *patient centered*, timely, efficient, and equitable. Examples of how we might leverage the power of patients and families include:

- a. MTF Patient and Family Partnership Councils which can ensure patients and families' values, preferences and needs are understood and addressed by MTF leadership
- b. Patient Centered MTF Policies such as allowing families to be with hospitalized patients 24/7, and involving patients and families as partners in team rounds and bedside nursing shift changes
- c. Welcoming Patient Partnerships by encouraging patients and families to speak up, ask questions, voice concerns, make known their preferences, and engage in Shared Decision Making
- d. Vigilantly Addressing Health Literacy through staff training, MTF self-assessments and addressing high-risk situations, such as care transitions and medication education
- e. Improving Provider Communication through enhancing skills in active listening, empathy, humility, transparency and motivational interviewing
- f. Patient Facing Technology such as fully exploiting the potential of the Patient Portal (coming in our next electronic health record), health apps, patient decision aids, and self-monitoring tools
- g. Patient Centered Accessibility which addresses patients and families' value for timely care; and alternative, convenient care options, such as open access policies, after-hours access and secure messaging

Standardized resources will be provided to advance Patient Centeredness. Success, however, hinges on Air Force Medical Service leaders fully embracing Patient Centeredness as part of our culture, our principles and our values.

The AF/SG POC is [REDACTED] 703-681-7629, [REDACTED] or via email [REDACTED].

MARK A. EDIGER
Lieutenant General, USAF, MC, CFS
Surgeon General