

## **Patient Engagement:**

### **A Guide from the Medication Optimization Technology Toolkit**

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#### **Description**

Interventions that seek to optimize medication use often emphasize enhanced patient education and self-management. In the management of chronic conditions, patient engagement reflects a harmonious balance between a patient's needs, preferences, and abilities and their receipt of appropriate professional information and care. Patient engagement strategies help patients better understand their health condition and recommended treatments, become more involved in their health care, and improve patient-provider communications. Effective patient engagement strategies can result in improved outcomes and a more positive overall patient experience.

#### **Applications**

Intended for use by organizations seeking to transform patients' initial commitment into full engagement in optimal medication use that is facilitated by technology.

**1** Communicate with Patients

*What information, tools, and other resources would help patients better understand their health condition and the relationship of behavior to health outcomes?*

**2** Build on Patients' Trust

*How comfortable are patients in using technology to help improve medication use or discussing health concerns with a doctor and nurse?*

**3** Support Patients in Meeting Personal Goals

*What are patients' expectations for making improvements in their health and what realistic personal goals can be set to motivate them towards meeting those expectations?*

## 1 Communicate with Patients

Communication is an ongoing and oftentimes interactive process that starts upon enrollment in the program through to a patient's discharge from the program. Patient engagement can benefit from information, tools, and other resources that support their motivation to make improvements and improve understanding of their health condition and the relationship of behavior to health outcomes.

Strategies that organizations can adopt to improve communication with patients to optimize medication use with the support of patient-centered technologies include:

- Track patient comprehension of their health condition, the program and the importance of patient activation in self-management of their condition (e.g., self-assessment surveys).
- Teach patients how to use the technology in the home setting, their role and responsibilities in care management, and procedures for reaching program support services.
- Streamline the technology intervention enrollment process to minimize the time between introduction and use of the intervention.
- Educate patients, family members, and/or providers often and with multiple forms of media (e.g., pamphlets, video, online tools, websites, and social media).

## 2 Build on Patients' Trust

Physicians are a trusted source of information and advice for patients. The level of patient buy-in and success experienced with a medication adherence and monitoring program is high when a relationship already exists between patients and their physicians. Organizations can take advantage of that relationship by having physicians communicate directly with patients on health issues or to address any concerns patients may have in using technology.

Strategies that organizations can adopt to build on the trust patients have vested in their physicians and care team members include:

- Have a trusted clinician introduce the intervention to increase the likelihood of patient enrollment and technology utilization.
- Leverage existing programs to take advantage of previous patient-provider relationships.

### 3 Support Patients in Meeting Personal Goals

Keeping patients and physicians continuously engaged is key to the individual patient's and program's continued success. Patients are more motivated to improve their health when they understand the relationship between health behaviors and outcomes, goals are realistic and well supported, and the benefits from behavior change outweigh the risks. Communication between patients and the care management team is critical for keeping patients continuously engaged and oriented towards meeting their medication management goals.

Strategies that organizations can adopt to motivate patients towards meeting their goals include:

- Tailor the intervention to the individual patient, family member, or provider based on patient needs and preferences.
- Provide “real-time” education to patients during a teachable moment to increase patient self-management and understanding of their condition and treatment plan.
- Incentivize patients to participate in the program; reward positive behaviors and health outcomes; and celebrate success.
- Promote provider education and training on effective communication skills as well as patient communication techniques (e.g., shared-decision-making) that build trust and a willingness to want to succeed.