Redefining relationships in healthcare, patient-and family-centered care is doing things with patients and families, instead of to them or for them. In this model, healthcare providers are the "experts" in the medical field, and patients and their families are the "experts" on the patient.

This mutually beneficial partnership between staff and patients and their families incorporates four core concepts: dignity and respect, information sharing, participation and collaboration.

In 2008, Anne Arundel Medical Center (AAMC), Annapolis, Md., sought to define its care delivery model. Patient- and family-
centered care was a natural fit with AAMC’s vision, mission and practice.

Today, "every patient and family member is treated in a manner that maintains their dignity and respects their preferences. Every patient and family is given timely, useful and accurate information in order to make decisions about their care and level of participation. Every patient and family is welcome to participate with the healthcare team on a level that is comfortable for them," the medical center’s website reads.

**TEAMWORK:** (top) Tara McCullagh, RN, and Christina Grierson, BSN, RN, discuss care plans with a patient. Using the patient- and family-centered care model means including the patient or family in decision making. **GOOD ADVICE:** (middle) Jeanne Morris, BSN, RN, is the advisor coordinator. Advisors are noted to be a large part of the success at AAMC, which boasts 87 advisors serving on 36 committees. **MEETING GOAL:** (bottom) Jeanne Morris, BSN, RN, advisor coordinator discusses goals with Rita Linnenkamp, BSN, RN, Magnet program coordinator. photo courtesy AAMC

Keane, RN, a 38-year nursing veteran working on the flex unit at AAMC, said the payoff is worth it when patients, families and providers are all on the same page.

"Now, as we approach decisions that impact patient care, we hear with increasing frequency, ‘Let’s ask the patients and families for their input,’” said Linnenkamp.

**Critical, Annual Goals**

In 2010, Sherry Perkins, PhD, RN, CNO, COO, questioned a group of 150 nurses and staff, asking them what singular change would help AAMC become more patient and family centered. Forty-five percent of the nurses were in agreement: re-examine the hospital’s visitation policy.

That same year (FY11), AAMC leadership developed the facility’s first annual patient- and family-centered care goals. The first goals were to begin a patient and family advisor program and to re-evaluate the visitation policy.

"We began with a group of nine patient and family advisors who, along with 20 staff, formed the Re-Visiting Task Force. This group met diligently for nine months, examining signage, discussing visiting hours and restrictions, and ultimately rewrote our ‘Family Presence/Visitation’ policy,” said Jeanne Morris, BSN, RN, advisor coordinator at AAMC. "We were officially launched into our patient- and family-centered care journey!"

Having two annual patient- and family-centered care goals has been crucial in moving the concept forward throughout AAMC’s hospital culture, said Morris, noting that the goals, which align with AAMC’s strategic vision and are communicated to all staff, are tangible and measurable.

Embracing patient- and family-centered care involves a cultural change in the hospital environment. Breaking down this large endeavor into manageable steps has allowed patient- and family-centered practitioners within AAMC to celebrate successes and achievements along the way, as they strive toward their ultimate goals.

**Advisors Key to Success**

Patient- and family-centered care has had a "huge" impact on AAMC, said Rita Linnenkamp, BSN, RN, Magnet program coordinator and charge nurse prep.

"We believe that patient- and family-centered care is not a program or an initiative or a project. It is a philosophy that is woven into our daily activities, our care and our strategic vision," she explained, noting that the cornerstone of the medical center’s success has been its patient and family advisors. At present, there are 87 advisors serving on 36 committees.

Sure, at first it’s hard to incorporate extra steps into a nurse’s already burgeoning workload, but Debra Keane, RN, a 38-year nursing veteran working on the flex unit at AAMC, said the payoff is worth it when patients, families and providers are all on the same page.

**Whatever’s Best for the Patient**

"After being exposed to patient- and family-centered care concepts, we have come to understand that we cannot truly know what is best for the patient and family without including them in the conversation," said Kristina Andersen, BSN, RN.

Kathryn Lidard, BSN, RN, staff nurse in the emergency department at AAMC, noted that before she became a nurse at the medical center, it had already opened up visiting hours. Even in her orientation, she remembers an emphasis on the importance of family involvement to the patient and staff. Lidard believes the family’s knowledge and support of the patient can only benefit the plan of care.

"Having an open relationship improves safety and patient satisfaction. As a nurse, I look forward to the changes in medicine when less confusion and more communication become a standard," she concluded.

Beth Puliti is a freelance writer.
Core Concepts
The Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care says the following four fundamental ideas make up the core of this approach:

**Respect and Dignity.** Healthcare practitioners listen to and honor patient and family perspectives and choices. Patient and family knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into the planning and delivery of care.

**Information Sharing.** Healthcare practitioners communicate and share complete and unbiased information with patients and families in ways that are affirming and useful. Patients and families receive timely, complete and accurate information to effectively participate in care and decision-making.

**Participation.** Patients and families are encouraged and supported in participating in care and decision-making at the level they choose.

**Collaboration.** Patients and families are also included on an institution-wide basis. Healthcare leaders collaborate with patients and families in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation; in healthcare facility design; and in professional education, as well as in the delivery of care.


AAMC's Annual Goals
Anne Arundel Medical Center establishes two annual patient- and family-centered care goals, which is an approach that has been vital in moving the concept forward within the hospital.

**FY11**
- advisor program
- visiting/family presence

**FY12**
- bedside shift report
- e-access to MyChart (electronic medical record) for inpatients

**FY13**
- palliative care
- e-access to MyChart for ED and ambulatory patients

**FY14**
- Peer-to-peer patient mentoring
- Interdisciplinary bedside patient rounds

**POST A COMMENT**

Email: *

Email, first name, comment and security code are required fields; all other fields are optional. With the exception of email, any information you provide will be displayed with your comment.

First *

Last

Title

Field

Facility

City

State

Location: (Select one)

Comments: *