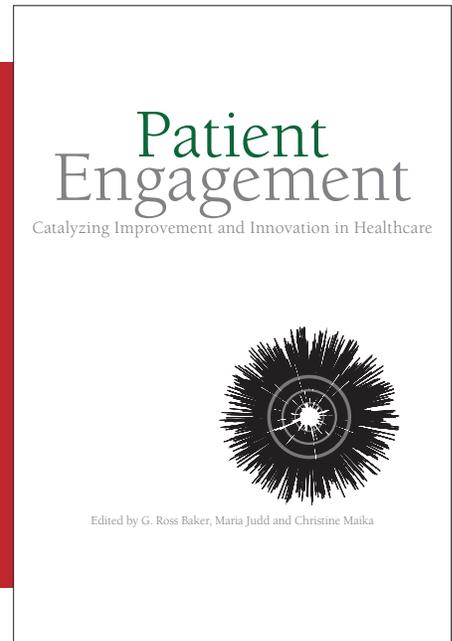


How Engaging Patients Improves Care and Has the Potential to Save Lives

A Review of *Patient Engagement: Catalyzing Improvement and Innovation in Healthcare*

Reviewed by Chris Power, CEO, Canadian Patient Safety Institute, Edmonton, AB



The Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) and Patients for Patient Safety Canada (PPFSC), a patient-led program of CPSI, believe that every patient should receive safe care, every time. We also believe that safe care can only be achieved if patients are active partners in their own care and are being active participants in co-designing a safe healthcare system with reliable processes.

Unsafe care harms people and takes lives. As noted in the recently released *Hospital Harm Measure Report*, 1 in 18 patients in acute care hospitals in Canada will experience unintended harm. *Patient Engagement: Catalyzing Improvement and Innovation in Healthcare* is a much needed and timely contribution to the patient engagement literature and practice. The initiatives profiled in the book are all excellent examples of how engaging patients improves care and has the potential to save lives.

Our own patient engagement journey, spanning more than a decade, is the foundation for this book review. Since 2006, CPSI and PPFSC, representing a community of patients and families that experienced unsafe care united by a mission to represent the patient voice in patient safety improvements at all system levels, pioneered and role modelled the partnership with patients that resulted in ingraining patient engagement in our culture and spreading patient engagement across Canada. It wasn't always a smooth journey, but our common purpose and positive approach focused on "every patient safe" and helped us sustain the momentum through some difficult times.

The case studies in the book present compelling arguments that patient engagement should spread and be the norm, according to the current literature and practice. Since the cases selected represent "the best of the best" and focus on successes, it congers the image of a talented athlete who seems to perform a complex skill effortlessly. It demonstrates to the reader what is possible and inspires them to aim higher. We know from the *Patient Safety Champion Award* winners and nominees that many organizations in Canada achieve extraordinary results through patient engagement and we look forward to seeing this collection of leading practices expand.

Patient Engagement: Catalyzing Improvement and Innovation in Healthcare

Edited by G. Ross Baker, Maria Judd and Christine Maika

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Appendix 1 in the introduction is a great starting place for the busy manager and leader who may not have the time to review all the case studies. Here they can find the cases, strategies and, most importantly, impacts that relate the most with their sector, setting or situation. For example, a reader tasked with improving hand hygiene, falls or infection rates and who wonders if and how it can be done in partnership with patients, can now find what others have done and start from there. The grouping of the strategies into categories helps the three user groups recognize themselves to find what they need easily. The experience at CPSI has shown that targeting content to different audiences (in our case, public, providers and leaders) is of great value.

Another excellent addition in the introduction is the definition of patient-centred care and patient engagement. Unfortunately, however, co-design is defined elsewhere and patient experience is touched upon, but not fully explained. This may make it more difficult for the reader to navigate through the book in order to comprehend all terms. We keep hearing that there is a need for a common language so these definitions are a great step in that direction.

The "novel image" presented in the book of "patients and staff having collective ownership of efforts to improve their shared healthcare services" is an image we too believe in, and we've been trying to create this, with some success, through the partnership between CPSI and PPFSC. Achieving this "novel image" requires a change in attitudes and behaviours of every individual – in other words, a shift in culture.

We concur with the three key elements of patient engagement presented in the book (it is not a short-term project, it is a complex organizational transformation and it requires

engagement-capable environments) because they reflect our own experiences with patient engagement very well. We also agree that the three core processes of engagement-capable environments (ensuring leadership support and strategic focus, enlisting and preparing patients, and engaging staff to involve patients) are indeed “must-haves” and will surely not surprise any reader.

The perspectives we bring to this book review are rooted in many years of partnership that has shaped patient safety outcomes, are guided by perspectives and experiences of volunteer patients and staff, and are informed by our work at

Canadian and international levels. We have achieved extraordinary advances in patient engagement, things we only dreamed of 10 years ago, and we continue to believe that by advancing partnerships with patients, care will be safer, systems will be more reliable and fewer people will be experiencing preventable harm. We thank the authors of the book and case studies for their contribution to our collective wisdom and ask each reader to consider what more they can do to ensure safe care, to save a life, to spare people from preventable harm. Everyone has their own roles and responsibilities.

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