



Patient Service Excellence Academy: Professionalizing the Patient Service Representative

Introduction

The duties of Patient Service Reps (PSRs) can have a powerful impact on patient experience and operational effectiveness. This entry level position is often the first point of face-to-face contact for patients. PSRs are not only responsible for being sensitive to the emotional needs of the patient, they also maintain electronic medical records, collect/verify insurance and referral information, and manage the “patient flow” of the waiting area.

Aimed at culture change around PSRs, the award-winning Penn Medicine in Philadelphia set out to professionalize this role by designing and implementing the Patient Service Excellence Academy ([learn more here](#)).

Program Summary and Timing

Frances Graham, Director Workforce Development at Penn Medicine, led the design of the curriculum. With a multi-team approach, Penn Medicine uses internal faculty and an apprenticeship model of on the job training to train each cohort. The Patient Service Reps need a strong foundation of skills to be successful in their roles; essentials include a deep compassion for patient care and experience in customer service excellence.

While the Academy curriculum began to develop, there were some gaps identified in understanding medical terminology and effective writing in the workplace. That’s where the [CAPS Accelerated Performance Series](#) is playing an important role.



Penn Medicine has incorporated 2 CAPS seminars into its Academy: “Writing in the Workplace” and “Medical Terminology”. The Writing seminar is enhancing students’ ability to deliver clear and concrete information often regarding patient care. Everything works more smoothly with quality documentation in patient history and internal correspondence. In between role play with standardized patients and hands-on training with the medical center’s EMR system, participants learn the basic medical terms they may not know if hired from non-traditional healthcare backgrounds.

Format

CAPS seminars are facilitator-led and highly interactive, each lasting 2½ hours. These are supported by online reinforcement, workbooks and post-assessments. A cohort of 20 students met onsite and practiced, hands on, the skills they will need to be successful in this role at Penn Medicine.

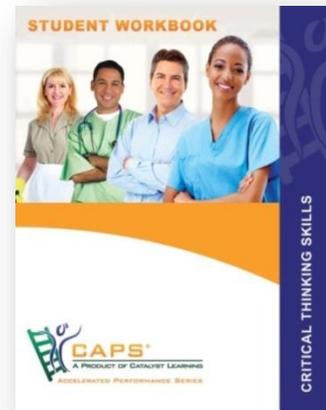
Patient Service Academy Curriculum

Instructor-Led CAPS Sessions:

1. Medical Terminology
2. Writing in the Workplace

Internal:

- EPIC APM training
- Medical terminology
- Telephone protocols
- Point of service processes
- Professional standards of conduct
- Extensive training in patient service excellence



Successes

Frances credits the success of the first two Academy cohorts to the influence of strong leadership at Penn Medicine, including the ongoing support of Executive Director of the Clinical Practices of the University of Pennsylvania, Beth Johnston. With plans for a third class in the works, the medical center is seeing an increase in their Press Ganey patient experience survey scores. Of the 20 total November 2013 graduates, 19 have been placed in permanent positions.

To learn more about the Academy, check out Penn Medicine’s web page, [here](#).

Interested in the Accelerated Performance Series?
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