



**GOING *BEYOND*
PATIENT EXPERIENCE
TO FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT**



ATW HEALTH SOLUTIONS

ATW Health Solutions helps healthcare organizations transform their delivery and improve outcomes by using engagement as a strategy to elevate patient voices.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[Do you want to learn how to engage patients in your healthcare system and community?](#)

Patient and family engagement (PFE) has been proven—through rigorous scientific study design—to improve healthcare quality, safety, and satisfaction. However, too many healthcare organizations are only scratching the surface when it comes to patient engagement. Too often, healthcare organizations rely on patient satisfaction or experience surveys to identify ways to improve scores and outcomes. They use input from these surveys to work on reducing wait times, implementing better signage around the hospital, and improving communication—and they believe that using this survey feedback from patients means they are engaging patients. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg.

This e-book will explore true patient (and family) engagement and how healthcare organizations can collaborate with patients and community members in designing healthcare services and solutions. In the following pages, you’ll learn:

- ✓ What true patient and family engagement looks like in the healthcare industry
- ✓ How the “voice of the customer” strategy can be leveraged and enhanced
- ✓ Why health equity, diversity, and inclusion must be incorporated into patient engagement strategy and operations
- ✓ How patient engagement and community engagement together drive policy change and improved outcomes
- ✓ How patient and family engagement drives not only better outcomes but also improved satisfaction
- ✓ How partnering with ATW Health Solutions can help your organization embrace and elevate the voice of the patient and their community

WHAT IS PATIENT ENGAGEMENT?

In the early 1990s, the term “voice of the customer” was coined to describe a process many firms had adopted to learn customer needs and expectations at every stage of the product development process—from initial research to manufacturing and marketing. Large companies such as General Electric, Toyota, and Domino’s have been successful largely because they have implemented this process—they have captured and collected the voice of the customer data, analyzed feedback and looked for trends, and used that feedback to drive action and improvements.

Consider, for example, Domino’s, a Michigan-based multinational pizza restaurant chain. In 2008, the chain came under fire as customers started complaining about subpar food and poor service. Complaints ranged from “worst excuse for pizza I’ve ever had” to “microwave pizza is far superior,” and the “taste of its crust is like cardboard.”¹

Instead of ignoring the complaints, the company embraced that feedback, promising to work days, nights, and weekends to make it better—and it did. The company conducted multiple focus groups to learn from its customers, taking their feedback to build a better-tasting pizza—everything from the crust and the sauce to the cheese and the toppings. Patrick Doyle, then CEO of Domino’s, said, “You can either use negative comments to get you down or use them to excite you and energize your process of making a better pizza. We did the latter.”²

Domino’s saw an uptick in sales and, as of January 2022, has more than 18,800 locations *worldwide*—all because the company engaged its customers and used their feedback to drive change.

Of course, healthcare is vastly different from pizza. But the same principles used in the voice of the

customer strategy—engaging customers, capturing feedback and data, analyzing feedback and looking for trends, and using that feedback to drive improvements—can be used by healthcare organizations to capture the voice of the patient instead.

Unfortunately, many healthcare organization leaders think they’re capturing the voice of the patient and engaging patients when they’re only addressing patient experience and patient satisfaction. Instead, a patient engagement strategy must be comprehensive to include patients (and family members) at every turn—a strategy that involves a healthcare organization collaborating with patients to design healthcare services. According to the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research, patient and family engagement (PFE) “creates an environment where patients, families, clinicians, and hospital staff work in partnership to improve the quality and safety of hospital care.”³ Most often, this looks like including patients and family members who are able to volunteer on advisory boards or advisory councils where they can share their ideas, insights, and input on various hospital programs, services, and policies. This strategy, unfortunately, typically attracts a homogenous group of patients and community members who do not represent the diverse range of perspectives and insights that the healthcare organization must consider.

Hospitals and healthcare organizations must also focus on equity to truly transform patient engagement strategies. Patient and family engagement can help improve health equity, but only if individuals from *all* walks of life—regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity—are included in patient and family engagement efforts. Only then can healthcare organizations truly embrace and elevate the voice of all patients.

¹ Haden, Jeff. “10 Years Ago, ‘Cardboard’ Pizza Almost Killed Domino’s. Then, Domino’s Did Something Brilliant.” Inc. January 14, 2021. <https://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/10-years-ago-cardboard-pizza-almost-killed-dominos-then-dominos-did-something-brilliant.html>.

² Maze, Jonathan. “How Patrick Doyle Changed Domino’s, and the Restaurant Industry.” Restaurant Business Online. Restaurant Business, June 25, 2018. <https://www.restaurantbusinessonline.com/leadership/how-patrick-doyle-changed-dominos-restaurant-industry>.

³ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. “Guide to Patient and Family Engagement in Hospital Quality and Safety.” Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. June 1, 2013. https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/professionals/systems/hospital/engagingfamilies/howtogetstarted/How_to_Use_Guide_Ldr_Slide_508.pdf.

CASE STUDY:

How Patient Engagement Paired With Community Engagement Can Drive Policy Change

In 2014, Dr. Neelum Aggarwal, a neurologist from Rush University Medical Center, and Dr. Shyam Prabhakaran, a neurologist who was then serving at Northwestern Medicine, approached Dr. Washington and the team at ATW Health Solutions with a request: Data showed that in Southern Cook County of Illinois, stroke was causing an increased number of hospitalizations and deaths—and they wanted to understand why in order to improve outcomes.

Dr. Washington and her team of researchers visited predominantly Black neighborhoods in Cook County. There, they hosted focus groups and attended community engagement activities such as church services and local programs to understand better why strokes were so prevalent and why people were not seeking care timely—although there were adequate certified stroke centers and legislation in place to dispatch 911 calls to the nearest stroke center—and validating why individuals were not calling 911 or seeking emergency treatment.

These community focus groups revealed hard truths: ATW Health Solutions learned that circumstances such as a fear of police and lack of trust in the healthcare industry prevented many individuals from seeking help or calling 911. An inability to pay the ambulance or other medical bills also prevented people from calling. In addition, although stroke was commonly experienced, the population lacked an understanding

of stroke and didn't know that time was of the essence when it came to treatment and reversing symptoms.

From there, the team at ATW Health Solutions began engaging community members, civic leaders, and religious leaders—whom they called “Stroke Promoters”—in designing and implementing a stroke preparedness program. By 2018, as a result of the Community Engagement in Early Recognition and Immediate Action in Stroke (CEERIAS) campaign, communities saw improvements, such as more Black men and younger individuals getting to care more quickly after a stroke.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Phase II of the campaign (2CEERIAS) began virtually. Over 11 months, nearly 40,000 “Pact to Act FAST” pledges were collected in neighborhoods on Chicago's South Side.

As a result of the work of ATW, health systems have connected their patient engagement work with community engagement efforts to improve overall outcomes and eliminate disparities. In 2022, Dr. Tanya Roberson, one of the community Stroke Promoters and Director of Community Engagement at Governors State University in Illinois, recommended a bill that funds community engagement and education to rid stroke disparities and lessen overall incidences. The bill, written by Illinois House Representative Debbie Meyers-Martin, was signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker in July 2022.



BENEFITS OF PATIENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Data shows that PFE strategies lead to better health outcomes. For over a decade, ATW Health Solutions served as a lead contributor to the engagement work for projects, including the CMS Partnership for Patients (P4P), Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative (TCPI), other research initiatives, and measures development. These experiences created a unique opportunity for ATW Health Solutions to research the relationship between PFE and quality and safety outcomes.

What we learned is this: Hospitals that leverage the voices of patients using the broader evidence-based

framework of patient engagement in quality, safety, and operational improvement efforts have better health outcomes. Specifically, we discovered an above-average correlation between high levels of PFE and lower rates of hospital-acquired conditions such as falls with injury and 30-day preventable readmissions. Hospitals that implement PFE into their organizational structure can experience improvements in quality and safety, financial performance, patient outcomes, Joint Commission requirements, and even CAHPS Hospital Survey scores.⁴

PARTNERING WITH ATW HEALTH SOLUTIONS

When you partner with ATW Health Solutions, you choose a company focused on improving quality, safety, and health equity by embracing and elevating patient voices. We leverage our expertise to provide various engagement solutions, education and training materials, and advisory services for healthcare organizations looking to transform their engagement and equity strategies.

ENGAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

ATW Health Solutions has earned national recognition for transforming healthcare delivery systems from ordinary to best-in-class. Our research and expertise uniquely qualify us to aid hospitals, health systems, improvement organizations, professional associations, and federal agencies with engagement strategies. We

offer a full suite of services and solutions that leverage our team's expertise and data analytics capabilities to develop and execute strategic plans for implementing PFE, health equity, and community engagement programs that improve outcomes. Our engagement solutions include the following:


Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Management

Our team can help you design and implement stakeholder engagement processes and plans that reflect what matters most to all patients at every level of hospital care. We also help apply PFE and equity metrics in scorecards for both strategic and annual operating plans.

⁴ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. "Guide to Patient and Family Engagement in Hospital Quality and Safety." Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. June 1, 2013. https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/professionals/systems/hospital/engagingfamilies/howtogetstarted/How_to_Use_Guide_Ldr_Slide_508.pdf.

Engagement and Equity Assessment

ATW Health Solutions' patented engagement and equity assessment makes an organization's patient engagement and equity work quantifiable and measurable by evaluating how integrated patient and family engagement is within quality improvement activities. This scientifically tested tool helps hospitals identify opportunities for improvement and provides a benchmark to measure success and recommendations to advance in action.



“This report was very useful in identifying gaps and opportunities. This was a collaborative effort between the quality department and patient experience team, so together we discovered opportunities.”

– VIZIENT MEMBER HOSPITAL

Patient Partner Innovation Community (PPIC)

Our virtual network of more than 3,000 patients, caregivers, and healthcare advocates is diverse and represents persons of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and regions. PPIC works together for the purpose of learning, education, and networking. Members of the PPIC have lived experience accessing healthcare. They bring that experience to the table to partner with organizations to reduce disparities and improve the quality, safety, and overall experience of all patients.

Patient Development Accelerator (PDAccelerator)

ATW Health Solutions' PDAccelerator assists organizations in establishing a stakeholder or consumer panel, engaging hard-to-reach populations in research, and bringing the voices of traditionally marginalized communities into market research quickly and efficiently.

Organizations that partner with ATW Health Solutions can use the PDAccelerator to recruit patients, family members, caregivers, and community partners to participate in focus groups, interviews, clinical trials, research, panels, or patient and family advisory councils. Our team will partner with you to gather feedback that drives actionable insights and improvements.

Improvement Collaborative

Our improvement collaborative is a virtual cohort of hospital leaders focused on improving healthcare delivery and quality outcomes. Leaders from ATW Health Solutions help train, educate, and encourage discussion and the implementation of practical strategies among hospital leaders, so they learn from one another.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING MATERIALS

ATW Health Solutions offers ready-made educational and training materials regarding patient and family engagement, health equity, and quality improvement. A 10-module series is also available to educate health equity and policy leaders about health disparity statistics, advancing equitable practices in public health, social determinants of health, social justice, and more.

ADVISORY SERVICES

Every leader at ATW Health Solutions has lived experiences that shape their understanding and recognition that all people (patients, caregivers, families, and communities) have not been afforded the education nor the opportunity to participate in improving healthcare to achieve optimal outcomes. We use this personal experience, our professional expertise, and formal training for partnering to implement best practices in research, patient and family engagement, health equity, and community engagement. We also help organizations leverage partnerships that transform the healthcare industry.

PASSION INTO ACTION:

Dr. Knitasha Washington and ATW Health Solutions

Knitasha Washington, DHA, MHA, FACHE, president and CEO of ATW Health Solutions, brings over 25 years of experience as a healthcare leader focused on quality improvement, safety, and health equity. Her career has spanned roles in healthcare administration, managed care, quality management, disparities research, and policy. She has also served as an adviser at the federal level, contributing leadership to large-scale national public health campaigns and quality improvement initiatives. Dr. Washington's professional training and expertise, coupled with her lived experiences, have allowed her to be a change agent in driving performance, quality, and safety improvements in the healthcare industry.



who died in 2009 because of a preventable medical error. His death prompted Dr. Washington's urgency to improve quality and safety for all people.

Since its inception, ATW Health Solutions has partnered with public and privately held organizations and government agencies to transform healthcare delivery systems. ATW's team of

healthcare researchers and subject matter experts have lived experiences that shape their understanding and recognition that all people have not been afforded the education and opportunities to participate in healthcare improvement or achieve optimal healthcare and health outcomes. They are skilled at addressing some of the most complex healthcare concerns in policy, research, quality, and health equity. Clients choose ATW Health Solutions because of our unique approach of strategically integrating engagement and health equity frameworks into our research and development, education, training, and work in healthcare transformation and policy.

In 2011, Dr. Washington began her entrepreneurial endeavors to advance her goals of improving healthcare quality. In 2014, she founded ATW Health Solutions, a healthcare advisory and consulting firm headquartered in Chicago. ATW Health Solutions honors the life and legacy of her father, Anthony T. Washington Sr.,





ATW HEALTH SOLUTIONS

BEGIN YOUR TRANSFORMATION NOW



Schedule a call:

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Join Our Improvement Collaborative

Learn engagement and equity strategy from leaders who are transforming hospitals and healthcare. The ATW Health Solutions Improvement Collaborative can help your hospital improve outcomes while meeting accreditation and regulatory standards.