



Patient and Family Advisory Council Handbook



Saunders
MEDICAL CENTER

Be Well.

Patient Family Advisory Councils

Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFACs) are a productive way for patients and families to partner with a healthcare system to provide guidance on how to improve the patient and family experience. The purpose of the PFAC is to partner with the local community and to serve as a platform for patients and families to address potential disparities and barriers that exist across many different aspects of culture (e.g. ethnicity/race, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender roles, socioeconomic status and age). It is the goal of PFAC to ensure that the community has the opportunity to share their perspectives and experiences while providing input on issues that impact their health and care.

Patient- and Family-Centered Care

Patient and Family-Centered care is working “with” patients and families, rather than just doing “to” or “for” them. The Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care outlines four Core Concepts of Patient- and Family-Centered Care:

- 1. Dignity and Respect.** 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.
- 2. 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 in order to effectively participate in care and decision-making.
- 3. Participation.** Patients and families are encouraged and supported in participating in care and decision-making at the level they choose.
- 4. Collaboration.** Patients, families, healthcare practitioners, and healthcare leaders collaborate in policy and program development, implementation and evaluation; in research; in facility design; and in professional education, as well as in the delivery of care.

(From Advancing the Practice of Patient- and Family-Centered Care in Hospitals, available at ipfcc.org/about/pfcc.html)

Purpose

To promote and support patient- and family-centered care at Saunders Medical Center. The PFAC strives to promote respectful, effective partnerships among patients, families and healthcare professionals in the community.

Saunders Medical Center Mission

To improve the health of the people of Saunders County and beyond by providing convenient and timely access to high quality comprehensive care with exceptional service and compassion.

Membership and Recruitment of Advisory Council

PFACs are comprised of current patients and family members whose experiences make them

good candidates for serving in an advisory role and supporting staff. Sources for potential members can be staff recommendation, physician suggestions, word of mouth, and/or tracked grievances or complaints. It is recommended that the CEO of the organization extend a formal invitation to the candidate for possible membership. A member of the council may resign at any time by submitting a written notification to the Director of Quality Services, and a member may be removed from the council if it is in the best interest of the PFAC (which will be determined by Saunders Medical Center staff). Council representation will be comprised of staff and patients.

Responsibilities

PFAC members will promote a better understanding of the principle of family-centered healthcare and the services provided at Saunders Medical Center. They will assist in promoting positive relationships between SMC and the community, as well as relay information of needs and concerns to the Saunders Medical Center staff and administration. Members will serve as active consultants with regard to decisions and plans that affect Saunders Medical Center patients and families.

Meeting Requirements and Frequency

All council members will commit to meeting quarterly. All decisions will be made by majority vote of the active members present at the meeting. Meetings will be one hour in length and will be held during the weekdays. Refreshments will be provided prior to each meeting.

Tracking and Reporting

Capturing the work of the council will be retained by creating agendas, documenting activities, and keeping minutes to track progression. A quarterly report will be prepared and presented to the Saunders Medical Center executive team, medical staff, and governing board to demonstrate the work and share accomplishments of the PFAC.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Addressing concerns with leadership and staff around HIPAA compliance will be necessary to ensure PFACs can function as partners in the organization. Education is the key to informing and supporting advisors and staff on protecting the individual privacy of patients. The following recommendations outline important points to consider regarding HIPAA education for advisors:

1. Include HIPAA training at meetings. This will ensure understanding of the advisor's role in protecting patient privacy.
2. Encourage the advisory council to always be mindful of their role in advocating for each patient and identified family members to receive information that will improve safety and care during their visit at Saunders Medical Center.
3. Require that all advisors sign a confidentiality statement prior to their first meeting.
4. Provide ongoing education to council members on HIPAA rules and regulations.
5. Use de-identified data in council meetings to protect the privacy of individuals.

Staff Education

Gaining the support of front-line staff requires educating and involving them in the process for PFAC development. It is recommended at Saunders Medical Center that all staff be required to have annual education on the purpose of PFACs, role of advisors, and suggestions on how the staff can include advisors to improve care.

Infection Control

If advisors are visiting units and coming in contact with patients, it is recommended that they visit employee health for preventive screenings and vaccinations. Council members should also be advised on proper handwashing technique when visiting clinical areas.

Inclement Weather

Council meetings will be cancelled if Saunders County experiences inclement weather and/or dangerous road conditions. Should a council meeting be cancelled due to inclement weather, all council members will be notified in a timely manner.

This handbook was created by the Director of Quality Services and the Performance Improvement Coordinator at Saunders Medical Center. The following sources were used to create this handbook:

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) www.ahrq.gov
Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care (IPFCC) www.ipfcc.org