

To: INTERESTED COLLEAGUES  
From: Susan Edgman-Levitan, PA  
Re: MGH Employee Patient Experience Interview Guide  
Date: September 27, 2023

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## INTERVIEW GUIDE

### “MGH Employees’ Experiences as Patients at MGH”

#### A. Introduction

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I’m part of a team of researchers at MGH who are conducting interviews for this project. We’re conducting interviews to get feedback from people like you who understand the health care system. Your perceptions on what works well and what we can do better can help us to improve hospital quality and safety. Information from the interviews will be combined into case studies on different aspects of the organization, such as respect for patient preferences, discharge preparation, and treatment of families. This information will be used to guide our quality and safety strategic planning efforts.

#### [ADMINISTER INFORMED CONSENT FORMS]

- Your responses will be reported only in summary.
- They will be completely confidential.
- You may choose not to answer a question or stop the interview at any time.
- The interview is being audio or videotape recorded so that we remember everything you say. However, your comments are confidential and will be used for quality improvement purposes only.

OK, now let’s discuss some basic information and how the interview will be run:

- I’ll be asking questions from an interview guide. We’re interested in knowing more about your experiences as a patient. There are no right or wrong answers.
- I want you to speak freely and honestly.
- The interview will take between 60 and 90 minutes.
- If you need to take a break, please let me know.
- Ask person to either turn cell phones and pagers off or minimize their use during the interview.

OK, let’s begin.



## WARM UP

### I. INPATIENT EXPERIENCES

I'm going to start by asking you whether or not you have had any inpatient experiences at MGH (or Partners health care sites?). If "yes", proceed with next set of questions. If no, skip to \_\_\_\_.

#### A. Background Information

Please think back to your most recent hospital stay at MGH. Tell me about that experience.

- 1) When was the hospital stay?
- 2) Was the purpose of the hospitalization explained in a way that was easy to understand? Were treatment options explained?
- 3) Did hospital staff ask about your treatment preferences and goals?  
**Probe:** Were they respectful of those preferences and goals? Who talked with you about your treatment preferences; was it your primary care physician, specialist, or nurse?
- 4) Did they listen carefully to your questions and concerns? Did doctors or nurses show respect for what you had to say? Did they provide answers to important questions?

#### B. Patient satisfaction with care from nurses, doctors, and other providers

One of the things we're interested in is whether patients feel like they had a good experience and were treated well by the hospital staff. Now I'd like you to tell me a bit about the interactions you had with hospital staff during your hospitalization.

- 1) Tell me what it was like talking to hospital staff.  
**Probe:** How did different types of practitioners talk to you (i.e., nurses, doctors, technicians)? Did they explain things in a way that was easy to understand? Were they respectful and courteous to you? How were they helpful? How were they not helpful?
- 2) Tell me about when your doctors and other inpatient staff talked with you about your medical condition(s), treatment(s), or procedure(s).  
**PROBE:** Did they explain things in a way that is easy to understand? Was there anything you didn't understand? Did they ask you about your treatment preferences while being hospitalized? Did they give you (and your family) as much information about your condition(s), treatment(s), or procedure(s) as you wanted? **IF NO**, briefly describe additional information that would have been useful to you?
- 3) Tell me about when you talked with your doctors and other inpatient staff about questions or concerns.  
**PROBE:** Did your doctors or hospital staff show respect for and interest in what you had to say? Did they listen carefully to questions or concerns? Did they spend as

much time with you as you wanted addressing your concerns? Did they answer your questions in a way that was easy to understand? Did they encourage you to ask questions or talk about your concerns? If NO, did you “press” for more information? How was that received?

- 4) While you were hospitalized, was the purpose of blood tests, x-rays, or other tests explained to you in a way that you could understand?  
**PROBE:** Did hospital staff keep you informed about test results? Did they do so in a timely way? Who primarily communicated test results to you? Was it a nurse, your primary care physician, specialist or someone else? How did they explain the results and how that might influence your care plan (e.g., next steps)?
- 5) Did you ever ask to see your chart? **IF SO**, what happened?
- 7) Tell me about when you would use the call button for assistance.  
**PROBE:** When you pressed the call button, how often did you get help as soon as you needed it? On average, how long did you have to wait for help? Did delays in responding to your requests for help turn out to be a problem for you? **IF “YES”**, briefly describe the type of problem and how serious it was?
- 8) Did doctors and nurse show concern about your health and how you were feeling?
- 9) During this hospital stay, did you need medicine for pain or other unpleasant symptoms?  
**PROBE: IF “YES”**, how well was your pain controlled? What percentage of time was your pain well controlled? Do you think hospital staff did everything they could to help you with your pain? Do you think you experienced needless pain? What else could have been done to help you?
- 10) Briefly describe any (other) challenges or difficulties that you experienced during this hospital stay?
- 11) Consider your overall experience for this hospitalization, were there particular interactions or events that had an impact on whether or not you would return to MGH if you needed to be hospitalized in the future?
- 11) How did the informed consent process go? Did you feel fully informed about the risks and benefits of your diagnostic and/or treatment options?

### **C. Care management and coordination of care**

1. During this hospital stay, did you have a single, identified coordinator of your care, someone in charge of your overall care? **IF “YES”**, was that person your primary care physician, a hospitalist, or specialist? **IF “SPECIALIST”**, what type of specialist? Did you know who the members of your team were? By name or discipline? How was this communicated to you?
2. Did you feel that the doctors and nurses who saw you in the hospital had all the information they needed to correctly diagnose and treat your health problems?  
**PROBE:** Did they seem informed and up-to-date about the care you were receiving? **IF “NO”**, briefly describe gaps in communication or coordination. Were there gaps in communication between your primary care physician, hospitalist, and/or specialists? Between nurses and doctors? Between nurses?
3. Were there ever any differences in statements about your condition or treatment made by doctors or nurses (i.e., one person telling one thing and then another person telling you something different)?
4. From your perspective, what could have made things easier/better for you?

5. Did you trust your doctors' and nurses' judgments about your care? Did you trust your doctors' and nurses' to put your health above costs?

**D. Treatment of your family by hospital staff (if appropriate)**

Now I'd like you to tell me a bit about the interactions your family had with hospital staff during your hospitalization.

- 1) Can you tell me what it was like for your family to talk with your nurses and doctors?  
How did you make clear that this person was an advocate/ representative for you?
- 2) Was this person involved in your care at MGH? If YES, describe the role they played.  
**PROBE:** How were they helpful? How were they not helpful?
- 3) Did nurses and doctors give your family as much information about your condition and treatment as they wanted?  
**PROBE: IF "NO",** Can you briefly describe the kind of problem(s) that occurred? What would have been useful to them?
- 4) Did nurses and doctors listen to your family's questions and concerns about you're your condition? Did hospital staff show respect for what they had to say?
- 5) In general, did they treat your family with respect and courtesy? **PROBE FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROVIDERS.**
- 6) While you were hospitalized, was the purpose of diagnostic tests (i.e., x-rays, ultrasound, biopsies, etc.), if any, explained to your family in a way that they could understand? Did hospital staff keep your family informed about test results? Did they do so in a timely way? Who primarily communicated test results to them? Was it a nurse, your primary care physician, specialist or someone else?
- 7) If you wanted, were family members able to see your medical chart? Were you or your family given the opportunity to record observations and concerns in your medical chart?
- 7) Were your family members or friends able to be with you as much as you wanted, anywhere you were? If NO, when and where did disconnects occur? How was this explained to you? Or, why do you think this happened?
- 12) Briefly describe any (other) challenges or difficulties that your family experienced during your hospital stay?
- 8) If appropriate, was your family ever involved in daily rounds?

**E. Patients report on whether an unexpected outcome/complication occurred and if so, the nature of it and its effects.**

- 1) Did doctors or nurses talk with you about all of the different medicines you were taking or other treatments you would receive while you were in the hospital?
- 1) Were you given any medicine that you had not taken before? **IF "YES",** did hospital staff describe possible side effects in a way you could understand?
- 2) Did you have any allergic reaction to any medicine? **IF "YES",** what, if anything, were you told was the reason for the allergic reaction and its implications for your health condition?
- 3) While hospitalized, were you ever given the wrong medicine or wrong dose of a medicine? **IF "YES",** did this turn out to be a problem? **IF "YES",** briefly describe the type of problem and how serious it was?

- 4) Did you get sick or worse as a result of being hospitalized? **IF “YES”**, do you think this was due to a mistake made at the hospital? **IF “YES”**, briefly describe what happened and how it affected you?  
**PROBE:** Physical and emotional implications.
- 6) Did you notice if staff washed their hands before examining or administering treatments to you?
- 7) Did anything happen that shouldn't have? If so, what was the response of staff?
- 8) Did anything not happen that should have? If so, what was the response of staff?

## **F. Discharge Preparation**

Now I'd like to ask you about your transition from the hospital.

- 1) After you left the hospital, did you go directly to your own home, to someone else's home, or to another health facility?  
**PROBE: IF DISCHARGED TO “YOUR OWN HOME OR SOMEONE ELSE’S HOME”**, How did staff determine whether you would have the help you needed when you left the hospital? **IF “NO”**, Did a need for help at home turn out to be a problem for you? Were you given any information in writing about what symptoms or health problems to look out for after you left the hospital? How were you made aware of what to do if these signs and symptoms occurred? **IF “NO”**, did this turn out to be a problem for you?
- 2) Were you and your family encouraged to participate in your discharge planning? **IF “YES”**, briefly describe how you and your family were involved?
- 2) Did hospital staff ask about your discharge preferences and recovery goals? Were they respectful of those preferences and goals? Which type of hospital staff talked with you about your preferences?
- 4) Did they listen carefully to your questions and concerns about your transition from the hospital? Did hospital staff show respect for what you and your family had to say? If YES, how?
- 5) Were your discharge medications explained in a way you could understand?
- 6) Did you have clear directions about what to do for follow-up appointments?
- 7) Did they give you clear instructions about what to do in case of an emergency? Who to call on your care team and how to reach them at varying times?

## **G. Hospital Environment**

Now I'd like to ask you about the hospital environment.

- 1) Did you or your family experience any difficulties with parking at the hospital? **IF “YES”**, what were the problems?
- 2) Was the signage helpful to you and your family? **IF NOT**, how could the signage be improved?
- 3) Was staff helpful to you and your family in finding offices, lounges, bathrooms, or eating places at the hospital?
- 4) Were there quite, private places where you and your family could talk?
- 5) Was there a place for prayer or quiet reflection?
- 6) Were there family lounges or waiting areas?
- 7) Was there comfortable sleep space for a family member in your room?

- 8) How was the cleanliness of the hospital overall? Treatment rooms? Your room? Your Bathroom? Family lounges or waiting areas?
- 9) Was the interior of your room pleasant? (i.e., lighting, color, aroma, views, art, and size)?

#### **H. Overall rating of your hospital experience**

I have just a few more questions to ask you about your hospitalization.

- 1) Would you recommend this hospital to your friends and family? Why or why not?
- 2) On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing the worst medical care possible and 10 representing the best medical care possible, what number would you use to rate the medical care you received during this hospitalization? What particular interactions or events contribute to this rating?
- 3.) Using the same scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing the least supportive and 10 representing the most supportive care possible, what number would you use to rate the support you and your family received during this hospitalization? What interactions or events contributed to this rating?
- 4.) Briefly describe what most impressed you about this hospital stay?
- 5.) Briefly describe what disappointed you the most about this hospitalization?

LAST QUESTION: Was there anything today that you expected to talk about that never came up?

Or

What haven't we talked about today that you think we should discuss?

## II. OUTPATIENT VISITS AND PROCEDURES

Now I would like to talk with you about your outpatient experiences at MGH (or Partners Healthcare sites?).

### A. Talking with Your Doctors

1. Tell me about the last time you went to see your doctors.  
**PROBE:** Listen for/ask about how they talk to their doctors; how doctors talk to them; questions they ask or things they wish they knew but didn't ask; perceptions of their doctors (i.e., all-knowing, engaged, in a hurry, hard to understand).
2. Tell me about when your doctors talk with you about medical conditions, treatments, or procedures.  
**PROBE:** Do they explain things in a way that is easy to understand? Was there anything you didn't understand? Do they ask you about your treatment preferences or health goals? Do the doctors give you (and your family) as much information about your conditions, treatments, or procedures as you want? **IF NO**, briefly describe additional information that would have been useful to you? Do they give you clear instructions about what to do to take care of the problems or symptoms that are bothering you?
3. Tell me about when your doctors prescribe medications. What do they tell you about the medications (i.e., effectiveness, safety/side effects, interactions, costs)?  
**PROBE:** Do they explain things in a way that is easy to understand? Do you ask them about any questions or concerns you might have about the medications? How do your doctors respond to your questions and concerns about medications?
3. Do your doctors show concern about your health and how you are feeling?
4. Tell me about when you talk with your doctors about questions or concerns you might have in general about your health.  
**PROBE:** Do they treat you with respect and courtesy? Do they listen carefully to your questions and concerns? How do they respond to your questions or concerns? Do they answer your questions in a way that is easy to understand? Do they encourage you to ask questions and concerns?

### B. Care Management

1. Does your primary care physician remind you about getting preventive care (i.e., annual physical, eye exam, dental exam, flu shots, cancer screening, mammogram)?
2. Do your doctors talk with you about specific things you could do to improve your health or prevent illness (i.e., exercise, nutrition, stress management, tobacco or alcohol use)? Briefly describe some of the things they talk about.
3. Do you trust your doctors' judgments about your health care? Does your doctor put your best interests first when making recommendations about your care?
4. When you visit your doctors, do they seem informed and up-to-date about the care you had received from other doctors? **IF NOT**, what were the gaps in communication? Did gaps in information or communication affect the care you received (i.e., inadequate information to correctly diagnose and treat your health



problems)? Do they seem knowledgeable of your medical history and the care they have provided during previous visits?

5. Do your doctors spend enough time with you?

**PROBE:** Asking about your history? Recent medical problems or symptoms? Explaining things to you? Listening to your questions and concerns? Answering your questions?

6. When your doctors send you for a blood test, x-ray, or other tests or procedures, do they explain the purpose of these tests or procedures?

**PROBE:** Do they explain it in a way that is easy to understand? Do they explain if there are any risks or side effects associated with the tests or procedures? Do your doctors keep you informed about test results? Do they do so in a timely way? Who communicated the results to you?

7. Briefly describe any (other) challenges or difficulties that you have experienced with your doctors during outpatient visits.

### **C. Unexpected outcomes**

1. During an outpatient treatment or procedure, have you ever had anything happen that shouldn't have? **IF YES**, what was the response of the doctor or staff?
2. During an outpatient treatment or procedure, have you ever had anything **not** happen that should have? **IF YES**, what was the response of the doctor or staff?
3. Did you notice if the doctors washed their hands before examining or administering treatments to you?

### **D. Scheduling appointments and contacting your doctors**

1. When you schedule an appointment to see your primary care doctor, how often do you get appointments as soon as you need them?
2. When you have an urgent care visit (one which is scheduled within 24 hours of the appointment), how often do you see your personal doctor rather than someone else in the practice?
2. When you have a medical question and you call your personal doctor's office during regular office hours, how often does your doctor or someone from the office call you back the same day?
3. When you have a medical question and you call your personal doctor's office after regular office hours, how often do you get the help or advice you need?

### **REPEAT FOR SPECIALISTS**

### **E. Physical Environment**

1. When you have been to the hospital for outpatient visits or procedures, have you ever had difficulties with parking? What were the problems?
2. Considering the same kind of visits, was the signage helpful to you and your family? Could the signage be improved?
3. Was hospital staff helpful to you and your family in finding places such as offices, bathrooms, or labs or x-ray facilities?
4. Were the treatment rooms quiet and private?
5. Were the treatment or procedure rooms clean?
6. Were the waiting and treatment rooms pleasant?

## F. Quality of care

I have just a few more questions to ask you about your outpatient visits.

1. Would you recommend your doctors to your friends and family? Why or why not?  
**PROBE:** Primary care physician, specialists.
2. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing the worst medical care possible and 10 representing the best medical care possible, what number would you use to rate the medical care you receive from your doctors? What particular interactions or events contribute to this rating?
3. Using the same scale of 0 to 10 with 0 representing the least supportive and 10 representing the most supportive care possible, what number would you use to rate the support you receive from your doctors? What interactions or events contributed to this rating?