

St. Michael's Hospital Residents' Health Services Panel 2016 Term

Summary of Results from Panel Meeting held on December 10th, 2016

Topic of Discussion: Engagement activities at St. Michael's Hospital

Executive Summary

The St. Michael's Residents' Health Services Panel was a representative group of local residents, made up of 28 randomly selected Panelists. Panelists were asked by the hospital's CEO, Dr. Bob Howard, to advise the hospital over the course of eight meetings throughout 2016 on how best to improve health services for its entire urban community. Panelists were tasked with helping to ensure that specific hospital initiatives are well-aligned with the values and priorities of local residents.

On December 10, 2016, panelists met for the last time to learn and advise on patient, family and public engagement activities at St. Michael's Hospital. The panel was asked to discuss how these engagement activities could be improved. After a day of deliberations, the Panel recommended both general suggestions as well as focused suggestions regarding different types of engagement activities.

The panel offered the following general suggestions related to patient, family, and public engagement:

- Emphasize engagement activities that have people help support patients and train care providers in the hospital
- Act on patient, family, and public advice and show publicly how it has tangibly influenced action
- Make engagement accessible and welcoming for patients, family members, and the public
- Look beyond health care for best-practices in engagement

The panel recommended the following specific advice regarding engaging people in the support of other patients and the training of care providers in the hospital:

- Develop a peer-to-peer support program to pair current patients undergoing treatment with former patients, caregivers or family members with similar experiences
- Develop and use a patient story video archive for staff training purposes

The panel recommended the following specific advice regarding engaging people in the evaluation & design of hospital programs:

- Offer opportunities to provide ongoing feedback throughout the patient's journey, analyze results, and invite patients who provide feedback to participate in more in-depth engagement opportunities
- Establish a "Secret patient evaluators" program
- Involve patients in the creation and execution of pilot programs

The panel recommended the following specific advice regarding engaging people in the process of establishing hospital priorities & strategies:

- Use a variety of methods to reach and hear from community members about hospital priorities and strategies
- Help people understand how change at the level of priorities and strategies has an influence on the ground

The panel recommended the following specific advice regarding engaging people in helping the hospital work with local partners on shared challenges:

- Co-host Regular Health Fairs & Open Forums to increase awareness of the services offered by St. Michael's and other local care providers
- Make the most of immigrant perspectives by interviewing them about their healthcare experiences abroad

Additional details are provided in the complete summary, below.

About the St. Michael's Hospital Residents' Health Services Panel

The St. Michael's Residents' Health Services Panel was a new initiative of St. Michael's Hospital. In February 2016, 14,500 randomly selected households in central-east Toronto received a letter in the mail from the hospital's CEO, Dr. Bob Howard, asking them to advise the hospital over the course of eight meetings on how best to improve health services for its entire urban community. Over 371 residents responded, and 28 were randomly selected so that together they represent the demographics of those living in St. Michael's diverse catchment area.

The selection process achieved broad representation by ensuring a proportionate number of panel members are appointed to the panel based on their age, gender, household tenure, patient status, visible minority, and indigenous status.

All panelists were committed to helping improve the health care system and each offered an important perspective concerning the needs of local communities. Collectively they brought a wealth of knowledge regarding local resident's experience in the healthcare system, and had a commitment to help healthcare organizations focus their attention where it is needed most.

Over the course of their first four meetings, panelists heard from some of Toronto's foremost health system experts about the way Ontario's health system is structured, the operations of St. Michael's Hospital, and the current demographics and health needs of central-east Toronto. Panelists also participated in a series of facilitated discussions to agree on six guiding principles and 15 priorities that they collectively believe should guide St. Michael's efforts to improve comprehensive care in the local community. These principles and priorities, along with the member's biographies, are documented in the Panel's Inaugural Report, available here: <http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/pdf/partners/residents-health-services-panel-report.pdf>

During the second half of their term, panelists focused each of their meetings on specific initiatives at the hospital that intended to improve local health services. The panelists worked together to advise the hospital on how to ensure that these initiatives reflect the needs of local residents. Their meetings focused on the following topics:

- In June 2016, members produced recommendations on creating an information service where patients can find out about all health services available in the sub-LHIN region. This can be found here: <http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/pdf/partners/residents-health-services-panel-160618.pdf>
- In September 2016, members produced recommendations on the existing ambulatory care services offered at St. Mike's. This can be found here: <http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/pdf/partners/residents-health-services-panel-160917.pdf>
- In October 2016, members produced recommendations on extending services offered by the St. Mike's Academic Family Health Team to patients outside their care. This can be found here: <http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/pdf/partners/residents-health-services-panel-161029.pdf>

- In December 2016, members produced advice on improving patient, family and public engagement activities currently offered at St. Michael's Hospital (details are contained in this summary).

About the December 10th, 2016 Meeting of the St. Michael's Hospital Residents' Health Services Panel

On December 10, 2016, panelists met for the last time to learn and advise on patient, family and public engagement activities at St. Michael's Hospital. The panel was asked to discuss how these engagement activities could be improved.

Before examining the topic, panelists participated in a warm-up activity focused on their experience joining the panel. They were asked to reflect on what they hoped to accomplish when they volunteered for the panel, and also to reflect on other reasons people may be motivated to engage with St. Mike's.

The panel then heard presentations from Jason Manayathu, Manager of Strategy and Corporate Planning and Erika Szego, Patient Experience Advisor. Jason and Erika presented about the types of engagement opportunities offered at St. Mike's Hospital, specifically Community Advisory Panels and the Patient and Family Advisory Program.

Before engaging in group discussions, each panelist was asked to consider how St. Mike's should divide its engagement activities between four different focus areas: Engaging people to help support patients and train care providers in the hospital; engaging people to help evaluate and design hospital programs; engaging people to help establish hospital priorities and strategies; and engaging people to help the hospital work with its partners on shared system challenges. Panelists then discussed the most effective ways for St. Mike's to engage patients, family members and residents in these different areas. Panelists split into four groups and each focused on a particular area of engagement. Dr. Robert Howard, the President and CEO of St. Michael's Hospital, joined the panel to hear their advice on engagement activities and to provide insight into the hospital's patient-centered framework and culture of quality improvement. The day ended with thanks from Dr. Robert Howard and a discussion of how the hospital could stay in touch with panel members and vice-versa.

Results

General Advice Related to Patient, Family, and Public Engagement

Emphasize engagement activities that have people help support patients and train care providers in the hospital

Before engaging in group discussions, each panelist was asked to consider how St. Mike's should divide its engagement activities between four different focus areas: Engaging people to help support patients and train care providers in the hospital; engaging people to help evaluate and design hospital programs; engaging people to help establish hospital priorities and strategies; and engaging people to help the hospital work with its partners on shared system challenges. Individual answers were aggregated. Panelists recommended that St Mike's focus:

- 35% of its engagement resources on engaging people to help support patients and train care providers in the hospital;
- 21% of its engagement resources on engaging people to help evaluate and design hospital programs
- 24% of its engagement resources on engaging people to help establish hospital priorities and strategies
- 21% of its engagement resources on engaging people to help the hospital work with its partners on shared system challenges

Act on patient, family, and public advice and show how it has tangibly influenced action

Panelists stressed that advice provided by patients must be used in a way that is visible, tangible, and easily understood by patients, caregivers, family members, and the public.

When advice is requested, patients, family members, and the public should be made aware of how the advice will be used and how they can find out whether changes are made because of the advice they provided. Those gathering advice should explain how the advice influenced changes at St. Mike's. If patients, family members, and the public have their contributions recognized and understand what impact their advice has, they will feel confident and reassured in giving the hospital advice. Panelists believed that quickly implementing and publicizing small adjustments due to patient advice can help build trust in the engagement process. If advice is not implemented, some justification should be provided.

Make engagement accessible and welcoming

Panelists suggested that St. Mike's should make the engagement experience as welcoming as possible for participants. St. Mike's should consider the barriers that prevent patients, family members, and the public from participating in engagement exercises, and seek to address them in their activity designs.

For example, panelists recommended that engagement meetings be hosted in the catchment area rather than always being held inside the hospital. This would open engagement opportunities up to groups that may not be comfortable travelling to or entering the hospital for a meeting. Instead, meetings should occur in places that are comfortable for them. Meetings should also be hosted at a variety of times that are accessible to as many people as possible, such as evenings or weekends. Music and food were seen as ways to help draw people in, make them comfortable, and feel appreciated. Having hospital representatives go out into the community, to community events and other public meetings, was seen as a way to better integrate St. Mike's into the community and improve relationships and build trust with community members.

Panelists strongly suggested that volunteers should not incur any costs for participating in engagement opportunities — travel to and from meetings should be reimbursed.

Panelists recommended that St. Mike's staff and care providers attend and participate in engagement meetings. Based on their personal experience, panelists felt more influential when staff were present at their meetings.

Look beyond health care for best-practices

Panelists suggested that St. Mike's should look beyond the Canadian health care system for inspiration on how to improve their engagement strategies. The expectations of patients are shaped by their experience as consumers and clients in other industries that are more actively soliciting their advice and feedback. These industries with client-focused strategies could help improve health engagement approaches so they better align with the expectations of patients.

Advice on engaging people in the support of other patients & the training of care providers in the hospital

Panelists developed two ideas they suggested St. Mike's implement to improve how the hospital engages people in the support of other patients & the training of care providers in the hospital.

Develop a peer-to-peer support program

Panelists suggested that former St. Mike's patients be engaged by the hospital as peer-to-peer supporters for current patients undergoing treatment at St. Mike's Hospital. This volunteer position would draw people from the diverse St. Mike's catchment area and beyond to support patients both undergoing treatment and following their discharge from the hospital. Volunteers would be former patients, caregivers or family members that have first-hand experience with the treatments the patient is receiving.

Peer-to-peer volunteers would combine their first-hand experiences with training provided by St. Mike's staff. Volunteers would be able to share personal stories with other patients, put them at ease, and make them more aware of how to care for themselves and navigate services offered through St. Mike's and others.

These volunteers could meet patients within the hospital around the times of their treatments. Patients and volunteers could also meet outside of St. Mike's with their patients in their own communities. This support system could exist both during and beyond treatment, as long as the patient continues to benefit from peer-to-peer supports.

Develop and use a patient story video archive for staff training purposes

Panelists suggested that patients be recruited to share stories in testimonial videos used primarily to train and orient care providers at St. Mike's to the wants, perspectives, and experiences of different patients. These patient story videos would help staff understand a patient's experience of both the hospital itself and what happens before and afterwards. Care providers understandably focus on the in-patient experience. Patient story videos would help care providers to understand a broader perspective they may not often observe.

Patient story videos could be incorporated into monthly staff meetings to be viewed and discussed by groups of care providers. Patient story videos could be tied to a specific focus that care providers have, such as Mental Health Day. Multiple videos of differing perspectives would give care providers a more complete orientation to a specific issue or treatment program.

Although patient story videos would primarily be used as a tool for training care providers, they could in some instances also be used by patients. For example, patient story videos could motivate other patients with similar conditions to seek treatment. Due to this potential motivation, videos could be available both in-hospital and online through the St. Mike's website.

Advice on engaging people in the evaluation & design of hospital programs

Panelists developed three ideas they suggested St. Mike's implement to improve how the hospital engages people in the evaluation & design of hospital programs.

Offer opportunities to provide ongoing feedback throughout the patient's journey

Panelists felt that feedback and suggestions from individual patients was an essential resource for improving programs, and was information that should be collected on a larger scale at the hospital. They suggested that patients should have multiple opportunities and frequent encouragement to share feedback on their experience, so that patients are able to offer feedback in a way that suits their needs. These opportunities should be both during delivery of care and following care, through both quick and easy ways (short, anonymous in-person surveys conducted during service delivery, for example) or through more in-depth methods (such as an online survey or phone interviews shortly after treatment that gave the opportunity to go into greater detail after receiving care).

Front-line care providers should be similarly engaged in offering their perspective on the care being provided, so that those perspectives can also inform quality improvement alongside patients' perspectives.

Panelists recommended that this feedback collected by St. Mike's should be stored in a database that would be used to isolate issues with care and develop new ideas for improving programs. This database would also contain contact information for patients and allow for follow-up with patients who could be invited to participate in workshops, meetings, and other collaborative engagement opportunities. Changes made to specific programs and services offered by the hospital could be shared with patients who have expressed an interest in how their feedback has an impact. Panelists stressed how important it is to acknowledge and use feedback provided by patients, caregivers, family members and care providers in a way that is tangible and visible.

Panelists suggested that it was particularly important for patients who raise concerns or experience problematic issues with their care be approached by the hospital and asked to participate in engagement activities focused on improving the design of hospital programs.

Establish a "Secret patient evaluators" program

Panelists suggested that some patients should be trained to act as 'secret shopper' patients who, while receiving treatment, assess the quality of care offered by St. Mike's staff. These patients would offer their feedback from a more trained, observational perspective, and focus on quality indicators they are trained to examine.

Involve patients in pilot programs

Panelists suggested that, before changes are implemented at the hospital, patients should be involved in the creation and execution of pilot programs at St. Mike's. Programs should be co-designed and then road-tested by multiple patients before being integrated across the hospital. Feedback should be collected from pilot program patients to iterate and improve the new system before implementation.

Advice on engaging people in the process of establishing hospital priorities & strategies

Panelists developed two ideas they suggested St. Mike's implement to improve how the hospital engages people in the process of establishing hospital priorities & strategies.

Use a variety of methods to reach out to and hear from community members about hospital priorities and strategies

Panelists recommended that, when the timing was right, St. Mike's should use a variety of methods to reach out to and hear from community members about how to improve hospital priorities and strategies. They felt direct mail recruitment, social media tools, and in-person outreach should all be used to help reach different demographics. Panels like the Residents Health Services Panel were thought to be an effective tool, but these should be complemented by other methods that give the hospital contact with demographics who can't or choose not to participate in such intensive methods of engagement. Going out to community members to speak to them, at places where they already gather, was seen as a potentially effective method here.

Help people understand how change at the level of priorities and strategies has an influence on the ground

In order for patients, family members, and members of the public to participate effectively in conversations about hospital priorities and strategies, they need to be given the context to understand how these priorities and strategies have a real impact on the care provided. Thus St. Mike's experts need to participate in sharing honest and forthcoming information both about previous hospital successes and also about current challenges. Engagement participants need to understand where St. Mike's is at in its strategic journey — what past changes led to tangible changes they would recognize? What are the hospital's current priority areas of focus and what changes does the hospital anticipate because of that focus? What strategic questions are undecided? By providing this context, St. Mike's helps engagement participants be informed contributors to the discussion.

Advice on engaging people in helping the hospital work with local partners on shared challenges

Panelists developed two ideas they suggested St. Mike's implement to improve how the hospital engages people in helping the hospital work with local partners on shared challenges.

Co-host Regular Health Fairs & Open Forums

Panelists suggested that regularly scheduled 'health fair' style public events be hosted to increase awareness of services offered by various health service providers, in the local area, including St. Mike's. These could double as open forums where residents, patients and families could come to learn about how the local health system works and share challenges they face with providers and leaders, while providing an opportunity for health organization leaders to solicit feedback on plans to improve care in the local area. These Health Fairs could be advertised in government offices, community centres, and public spaces such as libraries in the St. Mike's catchment area.

Make the most of immigrant perspectives

Panelists recommended that St. Mike's and its local partners view the international diversity of its catchment area as a resource of international perspectives that can help health system planning. Community members who experienced health care in different countries could be especially useful for the hospital to get new ideas about how to improve care in the local area, based on a comparison of health care approaches from around the globe. This could be interviews or a committee of local immigrants recruited to offer health system advice.

Individual Commentary from Members

No additional commentary was provided.