

## TIP SHEET



# Standard 2: Partnering with Consumers

## Tip Sheet 6: How to get feedback from consumers on patient information publications

### How to use this tip sheet

This tip sheet proposes strategies that can be used to meet actions 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 of National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standard 2.

These actions relate to seeking out and incorporating consumer views and perspectives about the patient information publications that you develop and distribute to the people who use your service. It is important to do this, as it helps to ensure that the information you are providing is easy to understand, use and act on.

### Why involve consumers in the development of your patient information publications?

Many studies have shown that health information often cannot be understood by a large proportion of the people for whom it is written. Health information can be incredibly complex, filled with jargon and referring to systems and processes many consumers may not understand or be aware of.

It is hard for consumers to understand their options, make informed healthcare choices or be a partner in health care unless they are provided with information that is useful and meaningful to them.

Involving consumers in the development of health information by seeking out and incorporating their feedback is one way of ensuring that the publications you produce for consumers meet their needs.

It is also a way for your organisation to demonstrate its commitment to engaging in partnerships with consumers on a day-to-day basis.

### What are the publications your organisation develops?

To start with you need to identify what patient information publications are prepared by your health service organisation, and find out about the processes your organisation uses to develop these publications.

Many health service organisations use patient information publications that have been developed by external organisations such as consumer groups, government agencies, local health networks or clinical networks.



### Links to Standard 2 actions on patient information

**Criterion 2.4** Consulting consumers on patient information distributed by the organisation

**Action 2.4.1:** Consumers and/or carers provide feedback on patient information publications prepared by the health service organisation (for distribution to patients)

**Action 2.4.2:** Action is taken to incorporate consumer and/or carers' feedback into publications prepared by the health service organisation for distribution to patients

You may have little control over processes involved in the development of these materials. Where this is the case you should focus your efforts on ensuring the publications that you develop locally incorporate the views and feedback of your consumers.

### Preparing your patient information publications

There are a range of things you should think about when starting to draft your patient information publication including identifying the purpose of the document, clarifying the audience, outlining the key messages and deciding on the format which would suit the audiences' needs.

More detailed information on preparing a patient information publication can be found in Tip Sheet 5.

### Engaging with your consumers throughout the development process

When you are preparing a document you should talk to consumers early on to ensure that you have a good idea about the types of publications that they need and can use, the type of language and style which would be appropriate and the content which would be most useful.

Once you have a draft of the document you should seek feedback on the usability, accessibility and clarity of the document. This feedback should be used to refine the document.

Depending on the extent of the changes, the revised document may need to be reviewed again by consumers to ensure that the changes you have made have improved the document.

It is helpful to have prepared some structured questions for consumers on the document.

Some examples of questions you could ask consumers to determine this are in the box below.

#### Questions to ask your consumers about patient information publications

It is best to ask open-ended questions (where possible) when trying to determine the usability, accessibility and understandability of your document.

Using closed-questions makes it hard to identify where any problems may lie and how to resolve them – particularly when they are delivered in survey format.

Consumer feedback on your patient information materials might include:

- If you were given this document would you read the whole thing? If not, why not? What could be changed to make it easier for you to read? (presentation/overall)
- Are there too many words or too many pages? Not enough words or not enough pages? (presentation/length)
- Which sections did you find hardest to understand? Why? What needs to be explained better in the document? Do you need more or less information in any area? (clarity)
- Can you tell me what you think are the top 3 things this document is trying to say? What do you think that would mean for you as a patient? (understandability)
- What do you think you would need to do after receiving this document? (actionable)

The specific questions you ask will be determined primarily by the type of document your consumers are reviewing.

An example of a consumer feedback questionnaire developed by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District can be found at: <http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/programs/partnering-with-patients/news-pbc/>

## How to engage with your consumers when developing patient information publications

The way that you engage with consumers within your organisation will depend on the type of consumers you have, the relationship you have with your consumers and the context within which you work.

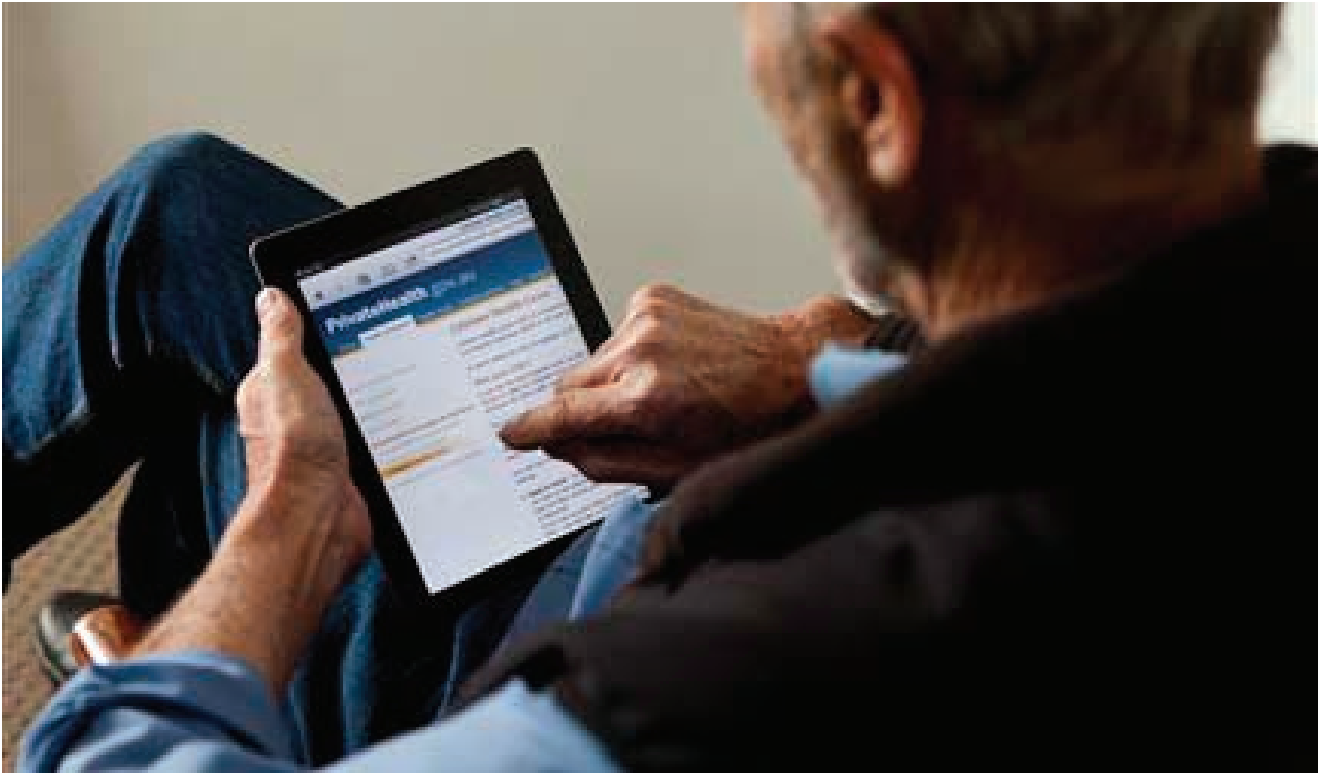
There are a variety of strategies for engaging consumers to obtain feedback about patient information publications. They include the following:

- **face-to-face conversations with consumers individually or in a group.** This could include chatting with people in waiting rooms or inviting consumers to come ten minutes earlier for their appointment to run through some structured questions about a publication.
- **surveys.** This could include providing a survey (or request to complete a survey) in pre-admission packs sent to consumers, providing surveys in waiting rooms or sending a survey to consumers after their procedure.
- **focus group discussions.** This could include inviting consumers who had visited your organisation to participate in a focus group or working with a local community organisation to hold a small focus group with their members.
- **telephone interviews.** This could include a brief series of questions within follow-up phone calls to consumers or specific phone calls with in-depth questions to consumers who have signed up to work with your organisation for these types of projects.
- **electronic feedback via a smartphone or tablet computer.** This could include having short surveys on tablets within waiting rooms or providing an email to consumers asking for feedback on publications.



It may be useful for your organisation to establish a list of consumers interested in partnering with your organisation. To do this, you could ask consumers whether they would like to be involved in improvement activities at admission or follow-up appointments.

For further information about strategies to engage with consumers see Tip Sheets 1, 2 and 6.



### Top tips about getting consumer feedback

- Before seeking feedback from consumers, have a set of questions ready and multiple copies of the publication being reviewed.
- Make sure you document any feedback you receive so that it can be used when reviewing your patient forms and information materials.
- When seeking feedback about different publications ask each consumer about one or two publications only. Consumers may find more than this confusing or overwhelming.
- Where possible, seek feedback from consumers about publications and forms that they have already used or are familiar with, or that are directly relevant to them.
- Consider the number of questions you want to ask and how you will present them to consumers. They might be presented formally in a survey or questionnaire or informally in a conversation.
- If you have a large number of consumers with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage or whose first language is not English, you may have some key patient information publications written in their language. Feedback about these publications should be sought from consumers who speak that language.
- When thanking consumers for their feedback you may wish to ask if they would like to be informed about the outcomes and whether they would be willing to provide feedback again.



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### Further Information

SA Health - Guide for Engaging with Consumers and the Community Policy Guideline (2013): [http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/f8d1d0004e454788aa0caf8ba24f3db9/Guideline\\_Engaging+Consumers+and+Community\\_Dec2014.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=f8d1d0004e454788aa0caf8ba24f3db9](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/f8d1d0004e454788aa0caf8ba24f3db9/Guideline_Engaging+Consumers+and+Community_Dec2014.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=f8d1d0004e454788aa0caf8ba24f3db9)

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality - Health literacy universal precautions toolkit (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality): <http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/quality-resources/tools/literacy-toolkit/healthlittoolkit2.pdf>

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality - Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool: <http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/prevention-chronic-care/improve/self-mgmt/pemat/index.html>

#### **Examples of locally based policies/frameworks and registers for getting consumer feedback:**

Eastern Health - Consumer, Carer and Community Participation: <http://easternhealth.org.au/about-us/consumer-carer-community-participation>

Austin Health - Consumer and Community Participation: <http://www.austin.org.au/page?ID=135>

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District: <http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/programs/partnering-with-patients/news-pbc/>

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