Patient Engagement with their Primary Care
Results from the 2010 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey

Sukirtha Tharmalingam
Senior Policy Analyst, Analysis and Reporting

September 27, 2011 – Regina, Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan Union of Nurses 2011 Innovators Conference
Moving Patient & Family – Centred Care Forward
Outline

- The Health Council of Canada

- Patient engagement in primary care
  - Our approach to understanding patient-provider level interaction
  - Methodology
  - Findings
    - How engaged are Canadians in their primary care?
    - Enablers
    - Outcomes
    - Physicians’ perspectives
Health Council of Canada

- **Key accountability measure in the 2003 and 2004 F/P/T health accords on health care renewal in Canada**

- **Mandate:** To monitor and report to Canadians and their governments on the progress of health care renewal in Canada; disseminate information on best practices and innovation across the country

- **Goals:** Better access, high quality care, sustainable health care system

- **Governance structure:**
  - Corporate Members: Federal, Provincial & Territorial Ministers of Health
  - Council: 13 members, government appointed, P/T representative
  - Secretariat: report to the Council
Patient Engagement in Primary Care

www.healthcouncilcanada.ca/patient
Importance of Patient Engagement in Primary Care

- **Benefits patients, providers and the system as a whole**

- **Patients**
  - engaged patients do better and feel better, take a more confident and active role in maintaining their health, are more satisfied with their care, and feel more positively about their overall health

- **Physicians**
  - shared decision-making is increasingly being recognized as an ideal model of care

- **System**
  - engaged patients have improved knowledge and understanding of their care, resulting in better use of health services and resources
Levels of Engagement

Levels of engagement
Patient engagement activities are diverse and occur at various levels in the health care system

PERSONAL CARE
Patient and health care provider

Individual patient/family and their provider/care team discussing decisions regarding treatment and ongoing care

PROGRAM OF CARE
Patient as part of a planning group

Groups of patients with a common interest involved in planning for the organization and delivery of specific health services, such as regional cancer services

SYSTEM OF CARE
Citizen or patient as part of an engagement strategy

Citizens or patients providing input into planning or evaluating a broad range of health services or policy, for example through a survey or a public forum
Approach to understanding patient engagement in primary care

- Patient engagement at level of individual care (one-to-one interaction between patient and their regular doctor)

- Engagement
  - In this analysis, engagement with one’s regular doctor always includes the following features: involvement in decision making, adequate time during visits and the ability to ask questions about recommended treatment.

- Enablers
  - A range of factors that seem to influence patients’ ability to be engaged in their primary care. For example, patients who receive guidance and support to help them understand the choices available for their treatment are more likely to be engaged.

- Outcomes
  - Measures of the patient experience that can be considered to be a result of engagement. For example, research has shown that engaged patients are more likely to feel confident in their ability to manage a health problem.
When enablers are present, are Canadians more likely to feel engaged in their care?

Are engaged Canadians more likely to experience the beneficial outcomes that have been linked to engagement?

Which demographic and contextual variables are associated with engagement?
Methodology – About the survey

The Commonwealth Fund’s 2010 International Survey of the General Public’s Views of their Health Care System’s Performance in Eleven Countries

11 countries, N= 19,638

Canada, n=3,309
Methodology - The 2010 Commonwealth Fund Survey

- 100 questions in language of choice relevant to the country:
  - overall views of the healthcare system
  - access, care coordination, use of IT
  - primary care, hospital, ED experience
  - specialist care, patient-provider relationships
  - health care coverage
  - prescription medication use, medical errors and safety,
  - chronic illness care, preventive care
  - health status, demographics
The core study was funded by the Commonwealth Fund (www.cmwf.org).

The Health Council of Canada sponsored a portion of the study along with the Ontario Health Quality Council and the Quebec Health and Welfare Commissioner (Commissaire à la santé et au bien-être du Québec).

3,309 adults
- telephone interviews with adults ages 18 and older
- data weighted by “age, sex, education, language, region” based on 2006 Census
- representative of the Canadian population as a whole, with a margin of error of approximately ±2% at the 95% confidence level
Data Analysis

- Based on responses from Canadians who indicated that they had a regular doctor or place of care (n=2,715), 82% of Canadian survey respondents.

- Informed by literature review, one-third of the survey’s approximately 100 questions were grouped into three categories to assess patient engagement:
  - Enablers
  - Outcomes
  - Demographic and contextual variables.

- Enabler and outcome measures with important association with engagement determined by cross-tabulation and chi-square tests of statistical significance, and either Phi or Cramer’s V were used. The findings presented are statistically significant at p <0.01.
Limitations

- Self-reported data from a sample of the population

- Survey was developed to measure patients' experiences, not necessarily their engagement, so we were limited by its content in fully exploring this complex topic.

- There are other elements of patient engagement as well as enablers and outcomes that could be included in future research.

- However, the model for analysis presented, and the findings provide a sound foundation for discussion and for future investigation.
Results: Patients’ Perspective
How engaged are Canadians?

- 48% of Canadians who have a regular doctor or place to go to for care are **engaged** in their primary care
  - always have time with their doctor during visits
  - always have the opportunity to ask questions about recommended treatment
  - are always involved to the extent they want to be in decisions about their care

- 17% of Canadians are **not engaged** in their primary care at all

- Lack of adequate time with a primary care physician is a key barrier to engagement
Patient Engagement in Primary Care: Canada Compared to Other Countries

Average = 48
Enablers of Engagement

- **Access to care**
  - Ease of getting answers by phone during regular practice hours
  - Time not wasted waiting for doctor at scheduled appointment

- **Coordination of care**
  - Regular doctor or someone in doctor’s practice helps coordinate other care

- **Continuity of care**
  - Regular doctor or medical staff know important information about medical history

- **Information support**
  - Regular doctor or medical staff explain things in a way that is easy to understand
  - Follow-up with test results
Access to care

Get answers by phone

How easy or difficult is it to telephone your doctor’s practice during regular practice hours about a health problem and get the answers you need?

- Very easy: 27%
- Not very easy: 74%

Question asked of all survey respondents

This bar shows answers to the survey questions for all Canadian respondents, grouped in two categories. The top segment shows the more desirable state. In this example, 27% of all respondents find it very easy to get answers from their doctor’s practice by phone; 74% do not.

* Due to rounding, the two segments may not sum to 100%.

These bars show the proportion of respondents in each category who are engaged, according to our definition. In this example, of the 27% of respondents who find it very easy to get answers by phone, 71% are engaged.
Access to care

Time wasted at scheduled appointment

In the past 2 years, have you ever felt your time was wasted because you were kept waiting a long time to see the doctor for a scheduled appointment?

- No (67%)
  - 56%
- Yes (33%)
  - 31%

% Engaged
Continuity of Care

Doctor knows medical history

When you need care or treatment, how often does your regular doctor or medical staff you see know important information about your medical history?

- Always 68%
- Not always 32%

% Engaged

- 64
- 15
Help coordinating other care

How often does your regular doctor or someone in your doctor’s practice help coordinate or arrange the care you receive from other doctors and places?

- Always 57% (62% Engaged)
- Not always 43% (27% Engaged)
Information Support

Easy to understand

When you need care or treatment, how often does your regular doctor or medical staff you see explain things in a way that is easy to understand?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Engaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always 72%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not always 28%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information Support

Follow up with test results

When you had blood tests, x-rays or other tests, how often did someone follow up to give you the results?

- Always 63%  
  - Engaged: 58%
- Not always 37%  
  - Engaged: 32%

% Engaged
Outcomes of Engagement

Respondents were asked:

Overall, how do you rate the medical care that you have received in the past 12 months from your regular doctor’s practice or clinic?

How confident are you that if you become seriously ill, you will receive the most effective treatment, including drugs and diagnostic tests?

How confident are you that you can control and manage your health problems? (Asked of respondents who had a chronic condition, n=1,265)

In the past two years was there ever a time doctors ordered a medical test that you felt was unnecessary because the test had already been done?

In the past two years, when you received a new prescription medication, was there ever a time when you were not sure what it was for or when or how to take it?
Outcomes of Engagement

Respondents were asked:

In general, how would you describe your own health?

- Excellent/Very Good: 66 Engaged, 57 Not fully engaged
- Good: 25 Engaged, 30 Not fully engaged
- Fair/Poor: 10 Engaged, 13 Not fully engaged
Patients who are engaged in primary care are more likely to be:
  - female
  - age 50 or older

Both men and women in younger age groups are less likely to be engaged
Physicians’ Perspective

Results from the 2009 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey and the 2009 National Physician Survey
Physician Experiences

Level of satisfaction with patient relationship

- Very satisfied: 48%
- Somewhat satisfied: 37%
- Neutral/dissatisfied: 15%

Routinely review data on patients’ satisfaction with care

- 15%
Access to Care and Caring for Patients

- Had arrangements for after hours care: 44%
- Ability to provide same-day or next-day appointments at patients request: 18%
- Patients experience long waits to see a specialist/consultant: 75%
Physician Experiences

Access to Care and Caring for Patients

Gave patients with chronic diseases written instructions about how to manage their care at home

Occasionally: 52%
Rarely: 16%

Patient expectations are placing increasing demands on time

Access to Care and Caring for Patients: 75%

% of Physician Respondents
Physician Experiences

Care Coordination

- Sometimes or rarely/never get timely reports back from specialists
  - 33% of Physician Respondents

- Sometimes or rarely/never get reports back with all relevant patient health information from specialists
  - 15% of Physician Respondents

Use of Information Technology

- Gathering information of patients' medications would be difficult or could not be done at all
  - 48% of Physician Respondents

- Easy to generate a list of all medications Taken by an individual patient
  - 35% of Physician Respondents
Conclusions

- There is room for improvement in primary care in Canada.
  - Enabling factors and positive outcomes that are linked to patient engagement represent the experience of **only 48%** of Canadians who have a regular doctor or place of care.

- Too few Canadians enjoy access to care, good continuity of care, help in coordinating specialist and other services, and clear information from their provider.

- Time is a fundamental currency for patients and a challenge for many family physicians.
  - Patients benefit from being engaged in their care; they feel better about their care and about their health. But this requires that physicians both have time and take time for meaningful discussion and interaction.
What Does This Mean For You?

What can physicians do?

- Take practical steps to re-design services around patient needs

Examples:

- Ask patients if they feel involved to the extent that they want to be in decisions related to their care - If they don’t, find out what more can be done

- Make it easy for patients to phone the office and get answers about health problems

- Investigate innovative models of scheduling such as advanced access

- Have someone follow-up with patients to provide test results and address relevant questions

- Use of self-management support strategies for patients with chronic conditions
What Does This Mean For You?

What can patients do?

- Patients have control over their side of the patient-provider relationship and a responsibility to ask questions and seek more information when they need it.

Examples:

- Bring a list of questions and concerns to the doctor’s appointment.
- Ask your doctor to explain things again if you don’t understand.
- Bring someone to appointment. They may raise points you haven’t thought of, and can help you sift through information later and remember what was said.
- Follow the treatment plan, including self-management support strategies that you and your doctor have agreed on.
Let’s talk …

Thank you.

Visit us at:

www.healthcouncilcanada.ca