

Frequently Asked Questions for Patient Focus Groups PCPCH Site Visits

Below are some frequently asked questions about recruiting patients for the focus group, which is an important component of the PCPCH site visit.

Q: How do we recruit patients to participate in the focus group? Clinics use various strategies to recruit patients for the focus group. The most common strategy is a simple phone call to patients inviting them to participate. Some clinics will invite patients who have been in for an appointment in the last month or have an upcoming appointment scheduled. Another strategy is to invite patients who have an appointment scheduled for the same day as the site visit which makes participation in the focus group convenient since the patient does not have to make a special trip to the office. Clinics interested in starting a patient and family advisory group often use this focus group as an opportunity to launch that process!

Q: Should we be recruiting a certain type of patient for the focus group? The only requirement is that the focus group participant be a patient from your clinic, otherwise any patient is welcome! Patients who get along with others and can offer something in a focus group setting (where there are other patients talking about the care at the clinic and in the health care system) tend to provide the best feedback. Patients who have been receiving care at your clinic for many years can also provide very helpful feedback.

Q: Are patients actually willing to participate in the focus group? Yes! We recommend you use the sample script below (or something similar) when recruiting patients. The focus group should include at least 6 patients, but we recommend you recruit 8-10 patients in case anyone needs to drop out. Some clinics offer a small token of appreciation to patients who participate such as snacks, lunch or gift card. This is not a requirement, but simply a nice gesture should you wish to do so.

Sample script for recruiting patients:

"We are participating in a program designed to recognize high quality care and make care better – it's called the Patient-Centered Primary Care Home Program. As part of that, the program is sending out some visitors to our clinic to talk with staff members, the doctors, and very importantly – some of our patients. Because you're a valuable patient to us, we'd like to ask you to come in to the clinic on _____ day to participate in a small "patient focus group" at our clinic – to provide these visitors your feedback about the care our clinic and others in the health care system provide, as well as your ideas about how to make things better."