



Sutter Medical Center,
Sacramento

A Sutter Health Affiliate

SMCS Physician

Message from Tom Gagen, CEO

March 2009

Physician Survey Results Show Improvement in Overall Satisfaction

The results of the annual physician satisfaction survey have arrived, showing improvements in several measures and an overall rating in the 59th percentile compared with similar hospitals – an 11 percent increase from last year. This survey, given to all physicians in the Sutter Health system every year, is one tool that helps Sutter continually improve the health care experience of our patients and the practice environment for our physicians. It measures physician views of the quality of the department, services and attributes of Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento, and identifies things that are working well along with areas needing improvement.

As in previous years, we partnered with Press Ganey, the health care industry’s leading independent vendor of satisfaction measurement and improvement services, to conduct the survey between September and November 2008. We had a 45 percent return rate – much better than last year – and I want to extend a sincere thank-you to all who completed the survey.

The survey results fall into four different dimensions of physician satisfaction: perceived quality of patient care, ease of practice, relationships with hospital administration and overall physician satisfaction. Each of these scores showed improvement from last year.

Dimensions of SMCS Physician Satisfaction: Percentile Rank			
Hospital Size Benchmark 500 + beds			
Quality Patient Care	Ease of Practice	Relation with Leadership	Overall Satisfaction
62 nd	41 st	73 rd	52 nd

In the last year, a large amount of work has gone into improving communications between physicians and administration. As a result, scores improved under all five administration questions: Information Regarding Strategic Planning; Confidence in Hospital Administration; Response: Nursing Staff Leader; Response: Hospital Administration; Communication: Hospital Administration. Two of these categories -- Response: Hospital Administration and Confidence in Hospital Administration -- were among the five questions with the highest increases in satisfaction, although there is still much work to be done. The other three were: Overall rating: Hospitalist; Scheduling Outpatient Test/Therapy; and Turnaround Lab Results. We can all be pleased with the progress in these areas.

Based on the survey results, our leadership is taking the following actions to improve physician satisfaction this year:

Responsiveness/Confidence in Hospital Administration

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (the Administrative Team and the Service Line Medical Directors) will attend monthly medical staff department meetings, MEC and credentials. He/she will collect input from physicians and report back to the group on any administrative actions and initiatives. We will also enhance communications by having Cecilia Hernandez, M.D., Tom Gagen and Shelly McGriff contribute regular columns to the SMCS Physician newsletter, with A-Team members also providing updates. Employee videos will be distributed to the medical staff. Additionally, we will discuss physician satisfaction at hospital department meetings.

Administration Deals with Change

Several crucial joint physician/administrative meetings will continue, including Quarterly Surgery/Administrative meetings, and the monthly Surgery/Anesthesia/Administrative meetings. In addition, the Administrative Team will meet with specific physicians on a quarterly basis to learn and share information.

**SMCS Welcomes
New Medical Staff Members**

Niraj P. Gupta, M.D.
1115 Cottonwood St.
Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 666-9500
Specialty: Psychiatry

Amer Y. Khan, M.D.
1020 29th St., Suite 480
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916) 733-3777
Specialty: Internal Medicine

Esequiel Rodriguez, Jr., M.D.
460 Plumas Blvd.
Yuba City, CA 95991
(530) 749-3310
Specialty: Surgery, Urology

**Safety & Emergency Management
Orientation**

It is the policy of Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento that all employees and medical staff wear photo ID badges while on campus at Sutter General Hospital, Sutter Memorial Hospital and Sutter Center for Psychiatry.

Wearing your photo ID badge is also significant during a disaster or terrorism threat. During a significant event, access to the hospital may be restricted to employees and physicians who have the appropriate Sutter Medical Center photo identification badge; those without a badge may not be allowed in the facilities. Your photo identification badge also identifies you as a licensed independent practitioner so assignments to care for patients during a disaster can be done quickly.

Any questions regarding photo ID badges can be directed to Medical Staff Services at (916) 733-3097.

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Patient Care Made Easier

Administration will continue several key initiatives begun in the past few years to streamline the delivery of quality patient care. Key programs include the physician rounding and rapid rounding developed by our Blue Ribbon taskforce, our patient flow team, RMC, continuing improvements in transcription turnaround times, the use of medical hospitalists and intensivists, and the eICU program. We also will conduct twice-yearly forums with the medical staff office assistants to share new information and answer questions.

Responsiveness – Nursing Staff Leadership

The detailed medical staff survey results have been provided to the Nursing Operations Team, who will develop an action plan to address specific issues/challenges.

I will keep you informed of our progress on these fronts in future issues of this newsletter, and am committed to sharing and celebrating positive results due to our efforts. Again, I want to thank all of you who participated in this annual survey. This is an important tool as we strive to maintain an environment that excites and engages physicians to want to practice medicine and take very good care of our patients. Please contact me should you have questions about the survey or desire an update on our improvement progress.

Doctor’s Day Breakfast March 30

In honor of National Doctor’s Day on March 30, Administration is hosting a breakfast on that day – Monday, March 30. A very nice breakfast will be served at Sutter General Hospital, Sutter Memorial Hospital and Sutter Center for Psychiatry in the Doctors’ Lounges from 6:30 to 9 a.m. And of course, we can’t forget the ever popular **CAR WASH CERTIFICATES**. They will be available March 30 and 31 in Health Information Services.

Pharmacy Corner

Here are decisions made about the formulary in 2008:

Committee Date	Generic Name	Trade Name	Outcome
07/18/08	Arformoterol tartrate inhalation solution	Brovana®	Not Approved for Addition (Rescinded 3/08 approval)
09/05/08	Progesterone Vaginal Insert	Endometrin®	Addition
11/07/08	Posaconazole	Noxafil®	Addition
11/07/08	DTap-HepB-IPV Combined Vaccine	Pediarix	Addition
11/07/08	Dexmedetomidine	Precedex®	Addition* (Approved with restriction to Awake fiber optic intubation; bariatric surgery; spinal cases with neuro monitoring; cardiothoracic cases; stereotactic frame cases.)

Medical Staff Must Rise to Meet Challenges We Face Today

By Cecilia M. Hernandez, M.D.

SMCS Director of Medical Affairs

Well, I've been on the job two months and I'll tell you, my learning curve is steep. There are so many things going on at SMCS and in our world that affect our lives as physicians every day. I am so impressed with your commitment and your contributions. You challenge me to know more and to do more. I hope that as I grow in this position, I will rise to meet the challenge.

Over the past two months, I've noticed some challenges we all face. How will you rise to meet them?

1. Healthcare is not recession-proof. We have seen a drop in our volume by about 10 percent so far this year and we are seeing more underinsured and uninsured patients in our Emergency Department. Things are not likely to get much better any time soon. Fortunately, your hospital administration is addressing these issues head-on to assure our mutual success. As VPMA, my role is to offer a physician perspective to our problem-solving, which is ultimately a patient-centered perspective.

Even as we create a leaner organization, we must maintain our ability to provide high-quality, effective care and we must maintain a growth strategy to provide needed services to the communities we serve. As you partner with the hospital to reduce costs, remember that *improving our affordability allows us all to grow, i.e. to provide more services to more patients*. It's good for the hospital, it's good for you and, most importantly, it's good for our patients.

2. We do not have patient safety in the bag. As much as we would like to think that we do not have "never events," "sentinel events" and "adverse outcomes," the fact is that we do have them. Still. However, we must not become complacent, thinking we are already doing everything we can, nor must we become defeated, thinking we'll never achieve perfection. We have an obligation to our patients – and, quite frankly, to ourselves – to continue to strive toward perfection.

Not one of us would have become a physician had we been content with "good enough." It's time we reconnected with the passion to achieve the impossible fueled with the hope of making a difference in the lives of others. It is at the core of the every medical advance and *it is in each and every one of you*. When you are faced with new projects, initiatives and tools, bring forth your creativity, experience and intelligence to make these efforts living, breathing manifestations of that passion. Make them yours!

3. There aren't enough hours in the day. I've met with many of you, but I am just beginning to scratch the surface of your concerns and to learn the issues you face each day. Being driven to achieve the impossible, fueled with the hope of making a difference in the lives of others, I will continue to seek your concerns, insights and advice and to take whatever steps I can to move us forward.

I know that you also have questions and wonder what is going on with the administrative side of the house. What's coming down the pike that will impact your ability to care for your patients? Where do you fit in with Sutter Health and the future of SMCS? What is the future of SMCS? I'm entertaining the idea of starting a blog, so you and I can exchange information more frequently and more freely. What do you think? E-mail me at hernanc@sutterhealth.org.