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Palm Beach Spine & Pain Institute | *Innovative Solutions to Pain Management*
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What is Patient-Centered Care and how is it Better?

With the advent of managed care, more patients are seen in shorter amounts of time and the amount of one-on-one time with the doctor seems to be on the verge of evaporating. Escalating pressures on the physician and the medical staff increase as health care approval agencies mandate more paperwork and justification for procedures. From the patients' perspective, care has become centered not on the needs of patients, but around the needs of the system itself.

Patient-centered care is a quality benchmark actively sought by medical care professionals, eager to deliver dignified care and re-establish patient satisfaction. How do we define Patient-centered care and its goals?

Patient-centered care treats the patient with dignity and respect, as one capable of making informed decisions and with the rights to express needs and preferences in treatment and expected outcome.

Patient-centered care is based upon communication and involves both patient and their families in the treatment options and potential outcomes. Patient-centered care involves the patient in all aspects of their care and empowers them to seek the best solution for management or treatment. It moves the medical practice away from minimal communication towards open communication.

Physicians in patient-centered care practices ask open-ended questions, encourage the mutual exchange of information and seek feedback from the patient to ensure that communication has been achieved. Patient-centered care addresses patients' concerns, provides ample communication and resources to alleviate concerns, shares information and treatment options with patients and investigates their understanding of their illness, diagnosis and treatment options.

Patient-centered care also addresses the physical and psychological aspects of the visit and treatment. It removes a medical delivery model in which the patient, often in pain or discomfort, is asked to sit or stand for extended periods of time in waiting rooms, exam or procedure rooms with little physical comfort or amenities, often without access to loved ones or caregivers.

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Patient-centered care had its roots in the 1980's when hospitals began to notice changing shifts in perceptions regarding maternity, the birthing experience and family participation. Their response was to create birthing suites and ultimately entire birthing centers as mothers and fathers-to-be changed their expectations about giving birth, insisting that the experience be less clinical and become one more of maximum support and comfort for mother, newborn and family. The concept has expanded to off-site surgical centers and physician owned medical and surgical practices.

Patient-centered care provides the patient with a physical and emotional environment conducive to a caring and compassionate experience. In some cases that means physical modifications to waiting and treatment rooms and to the procedures to maximize privacy and comfort, minimize outside distractions and noise, and provide a dignity of experience from beginning of treatment to completion.

Addressing the physical model involves examining every aspect of a patient's experience, from arrival to the time the procedure or care is complete and the patient leaves with a caregiver. This addressing of the physical environment may require the medical staff to perform a checklist evaluation of each of the spaces, rating adequacy and comfort for the intended purpose, and the process of moving swiftly and smoothly through each area from waiting to exit. Follow up may solicit patient feedback on the experience.

Patient-centered care respects appointment times, the need for privacy in the discussion of medical and other information in public places of the practice. Privacy includes the quiet and private collection of personal patient information including address, phone numbers, appointment setting, follow up calls and all billing and collection processes.

Patient-centered care involves the training of all staff in interpersonal relations and the showing of utmost respect without condescension.

Outcomes of Patient-centered care are measures of satisfaction such as a willingness to share a positive experience with friends and family and to recommend the treatment practice to others. The outcome of Patient-centered care is a complete system in which patients and families feel cared for, respected and involved, and where medical providers are able to reconnect to the mission of patient care.

Want more information about Patient-centered care and the positive impact on patient and family? Visit <http://www.helpain.com>

Founders of Palm Beach Spine & Pain Institute, Specialists in Anesthesiology, Pain Medicine and Management, Lawrence Gorfine, M.D. and Douglas MacLear, D.O. are Board-Certified physicians specializing in performing innovative, minimally invasive techniques and procedures that eliminate pain at its source.

Palm Beach Spine & Pain Institute is located at 2290 10th Avenue North, Suite 600, Lake Worth, FL 33461, centrally located near Wellington, Royal Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, Palm Beach Gardens, Boca Raton and Ft. Lauderdale, FL Founders are Board Certified Specialists in Anesthesiology, Pain Medicine and Management, Lawrence Gorfine, M.D. and Douglas MacLear, D.O.

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