

Increasing Patient and Staff Engagement through Meaningful Nurse Recognition:

Interactive, Interoperable
Patient Engagement
Systems Make It Possible





Introduction

The nurse–patient relationship has always been important, but that importance has truly been brought to the fore by the COVID-19 pandemic. As healthcare organizations urgently seek ways to battle the novel coronavirus, skilled nurses are one of the most potent weapons in their arsenal. Indeed, a good nurse–patient relationship has been shown to shorten length of stay and increase the satisfaction of both.ⁱ But during these trying times, when hospitals are full, PPE is in short supply, and frontline healthcare workers are vulnerable too, compassion fatigue and burnout represent an additional threat to nurse satisfaction, engagement, and retention. One mitigating factor is meaningful recognition.

Meaningful recognition: feedback that is relevant to the situation, acknowledges behaviors and the impact they had on others, and is equal to the person’s contribution.ⁱⁱ

Meaningful recognition is one of six crucial components of a healthy work environment for nurses, according to the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN). The other components are skilled communication, true collaboration, effective decision making, appropriate staffing, and authentic leadership (AACN Standards, 2016).

The DAISY Award



The DAISY Award has been used in studies as a proxy for meaningful nurse recognition. Established in 1999 in memory of the founders' son Patrick and to honor the extraordinary care provided to him, the award is given monthly in over 4,600 hospitals and nursing schools in the United States and 28 countries around the world. Since its inception, more than 1.8 million nominations have been submitted by grateful patients and appreciative colleagues.

The award not only underscores the esteem in which the nurse is held. The DAISY Foundation also provides honorees opportunities for reduced tuition to advance their education, scholarships to attend conferences for professional development, medical mission grants, discounts on American Nurses Credentialing Center (AACN) certification, and more.

DAISY engages patients, families, and co-workers in sharing their stories of the amazing, compassionate care nurses provide and creates a process of ongoing recognition that nurses truly make a difference.

– Bonnie Barnes, DAISY Foundation Co-Founder and CEO

Organizations benefit from the impact of meaningful recognition through DAISY, as supported by qualitative and quantitative evidence. Benefits to organizations that implement the DAISY program include:

- A healthy work environment that contributes to resilience, job satisfaction, and retention.
- Increased nurse engagement contributing to reduced compassion fatigue/burnout and elevated compassion satisfaction.
- Supports a sense of teamwork.
- Improved patient and family experience.

Indeed, researchers have found that patients in healthcare facilities that recognize compassionate care have higher confidence in and loyalty to the institution and are more likely to recommend it to others. A study conducted at 269 U.S. hospitals found that compassion practices—rewarding compassionate acts—correlates to higher ratings in the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS).ⁱⁱ Scores on this assessment drive up to 30 percent of hospital reimbursement, making it clear that meaningful recognition can be good for the bottom line.



Basics of the Interactive Patient System

Interactive patient systems (IPS) can improve patient comfort, provide insights into the patient experience, and enable more responsive patient care. An IPS can connect with electronic health records to deliver patient education to the bedside, and document that the patient has seen and understood those messages. Therapeutic music and relaxation exercises to manage stress and promote healing are often made available from the IPS system in addition to entertainment options such as games, television, and movies. Since this spring, in a growing number of U.S. hospitals, the pCare IPS can also be used to nominate a nurse for the DAISY Award.

From their pillow speaker, patients can enter their mobile phone number. They will receive a text with a link to their hospital's DAISY nomination site, where they can compose a nomination text of any length, at their leisure.

DAISY Nominations through pCare

Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC), part of Hackensack Meridian Health in New Jersey, has been providing meaningful recognition for nurses through DAISY since 2011. *“We feel strongly about boosting the morale in our organization and reinforcing how valued our nurses are,”* says Christy Magno, manager of human experience for the emergency department.

“This recognition does not come from the hospital or its leadership but from patients who have received direct care from these nurses and shared their stories with us,” adds Maria Dickson, education specialist and former nurse manager.

HUMC added DAISY nomination functionality to its pCare system in June 2020. Previously, patients only had the choice to hand-write nominations on paper forms and put them in special drop boxes located throughout the hospital. Now, with pCare, the DAISY nomination appears as an option on the patient’s room television screen. *“This is important, because it gives patients an opportunity to recognize someone in real time,”* says Dickson.

Prior to the pCare interface, HUMC did face some logistics challenges managing the DAISY

nominations, Dickson says. Collecting the forms was the responsibility of volunteers and not always timely. *“pCare solved our problem of getting nominations in real time so we didn’t miss opportunities to recognize great people,”* she says.

Increased accessibility through pCare has increased the number of nominations at HUMC to about 25 per month. *“We are seeing much better results in getting out these awards that are so needed during this difficult time, when morale is low,”* Dickson says. *“Our nurses know there are people out there who need them and that they touched these patients’ lives.”*

The pCare/DAISY integration experience has been similar at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. *“DAISY is a wonderful way to recognize staff, especially when it comes from a patient,”* says Nurse Coordinator Cynthia Bruder. *“It’s especially important now when healthcare workers need an extra pat on the back. The pCare system makes all the difference because patients do want to recognize the nurses. Giving them the ability to do it right then and there makes it easy and satisfying.”*

Having the option of nominating a nurse on the pCare system has been very beneficial to recognizing the hard work and quality care our nurses are providing to patients. The increase in nominations compared to last year alone shows how much easier it is through technology at their fingertips. Patients are much more willing to commend the care they receive from nurses during their stay!

– Andrea Peine-Ardila, MHA, PMP, Hackensack University Medical Center



Improve Patient Experience

Submitting a DAISY nomination gives patients an opportunity to tell their stories. This is especially important at a time when family and friends may not be able to visit. Researchers interviewed patients who nominated nurses for a DAISY Award and found that expressing gratitude is important to patients and families, and that their expression of gratitude transcends the moment. *“Nominations not only served as a mechanism to express gratitude and publicly recognize a nurse for the care received but were also personal stories that served to journal the experience,”* they write.^{iv}

Here are examples from real nominations received at the Hospital for Special Surgery:

“My stay here was a bit strange because due to various reasons including COVID two important people couldn’t be here to support and visit me. One of them being my son. My son has a way of calming me down and making me feel cared for. So, my nurse became my surrogate son. He encouraged me and made me feel like I was always doing a good job in my recovery. He didn’t make me ever feel like I was bothering him. I felt like I had the ultimate in caregiving. There are so many wonderful people on unit I would have to take up a lot of space to thank them all; you gave me the start I needed to get my quality of life back. To my nurse: Keep up the good work, you were made to do this! Love and hugs. P.S. I will never say I am a low maintenance patient again. Maybe medium maintenance!!!”

“My first time seeing [my nurse], I was in the worst pain I have ever experienced in my life. I knew as soon as we locked eyes that this is the angel that’s going to help me. She has been with me every day and has been so supporting, positive, and reassuring. My only regret is that I won’t see her when I go home because I wanted her to see how much she helped me. I will ALWAYS remember your kind eyes, that beautiful smile that lit up my room every morning and night, and the battle you helped me win so gracefully. I thank you for your support both physically and emotionally and always remember what an amazing person you are. I wish you all the best in life!”

Increase Staff Engagement and Retention

Compassion fatigue and burnout have been well documented as professional risks for nurses that can result in reduced job satisfaction and increased attrition. This is especially true of emergency nurses, 82 percent of whom reported moderate to high levels of burnout through a professional quality of life survey; 86 percent had moderate to high levels of compassion fatigue. Further, emergency nurses reported less compassion satisfaction.^v

These trends have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which nurses have been pushed to and beyond their personal limits. In September 2020, faculty at the University of Arizona College of Nursing called nurse burnout “the next COVID-19 crisis.” They asked nurses on social media what they would like the public and healthcare leaders to know about their experiences during the pandemic. A key finding: 39 percent of nurses said they are considering leaving their jobs, and 18 percent said they are thinking of leaving nursing altogether.^{vi} The turnover rate among nurses in the United States prior to

COVID was 15.9 percent but is likely to spike once hiring freezes are lifted, experts say.

Meaningful recognition like the DAISY award by hospitals and health systems may help to ameliorate these effects. “Mattering,” feeling that one makes a difference in the lives of others, has been shown to correlate with higher engagement and lower burnout among nurses.^{vii}

For hospital leaders and decision makers, the integration of meaningful recognition with technology not only makes it more convenient for patients to submit DAISY nominations, but also generates data that can inform actionable insights around patient experience. Researchers who analyzed nurse recognition comments collected via an interactive patient system identified behaviors associated with extraordinary nursing.^{viii} This analysis revealed “nurse themes and behaviors most meaningful to patients and their family members” and can inform nurse training and performance assessments.



Linking patient and family expressions of gratitude to metrics operationalizes quality at the care delivery juncture... [T]hese expressions of patient/family gratitude provide nurse leaders with insight regarding all the right going on in their facilities.^{ix}

"pCare has been helpful for us in a lot of ways, including generating patient data. The company has been very responsive to our needs," says Chao Wu, Chief Patient Experience Officer at the Hospital for Special Surgery. "The DAISY Award platform has been very useful in allowing patients to recognize the staff by name who are at the heart of their experience at HSS. Nurses who are nominated for this very prestigious award know they are going above and beyond in their role."

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