

Health care workers' satisfaction key to patient experiences

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The health care industry's trend toward making care more consumer-driven and patient-centered by transferring risk and control to patients is actually placing more stress on those who work on the front lines,

particularly in light of COVID-19, say researchers from Florida Atlantic University and four other institutions in a study published in the *Journal of Service Management*.

"Health care providers are expected at times to achieve [the] Triple Aim (better patient experiences, improved [population health](#), and reduced costs) without being provided the necessary resources, which has led to their reduced well-being and high burnout levels reported by significant proportions of physicians and nurses," the study stated. "In fact, burnout is such a problem in health care that the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) released a comprehensive report arguing that clinician burnout and lack of well-being is one of the most important problems facing health care."

Health care organizations would benefit by realizing that ensuring providers find their work satisfying is a necessary part of delivering high-quality patient experiences, said Andrew Gallan, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Marketing Department within FAU's College of Business.

Gallan, director of the Center for Services Marketing and Management, also points out that how providers are rewarded needs to be aligned with their motives to deliver the highest quality care. Additionally, their work environments and workloads should be designed and managed to do the same.

"As health care has delivered more telehealth visits, especially now during the pandemic, these points are even more important than ever to consider, as it has placed additional pressure on an already stressed health care system," Gallan said.

Gallan worked on the research with Timothy Vogus, Ph.D., a professor of management at Vanderbilt University; Cheryl Rathert, Ph.D., an

associate professor of health management and policy at St. Louis University; Dahlia El-Manstrly, Ph.D., lecturer in marketing at the University of Edinburgh Business School; and Alexis Strong, a doctoral candidate at the Cornell SC Johnson College of Business.

The study describes the challenge of truly patient-centered care as resulting from five tensions with traditional approaches: patient focus vs. employee focus; provider incentives vs. provider motivations; standardization vs. customization; patient workload vs. organizational workload; and service recovery vs. risk of litigation. The researchers offer insight into why the tensions exist and how they may be addressed.

Potential solutions include: creating a climate that supports better and deeper relationships between providers and patients; implementing workplace caring and compassion practices that support patients, families, and providers; and adopting a process improvement method aimed at improving quality while also lowering costs.

The shift to more consumer-driven [health](#) care is a complex, but manageable process when approached holistically, the researchers noted.

"But within that complexity lies a coherence that can drive further [research]," the study stated. "Ensuring patient-centered [health care](#) delivery demands it."

More information: Timothy J. Vogus et al. Whose experience is it anyway? Toward a constructive engagement of tensions in patient-centered health care, *Journal of Service Management* (2020). [DOI: 10.1108/JOSM-04-2020-0095](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-04-2020-0095)

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