



TPTN PROVIDER NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2011

CONTRIBUTING ARTICLE

Inside this Issue:

Effective Communication

By Gwen Stanulis, MSN, RN-HSD

In today's health care world, the customer, our patients, our referral sources, as well as our dedicated, knowledge based workers are the reasons the company exists. The way an organization's employees communicate with internal and external customers can improve its customer satisfaction rates, as well as brand its image. We know that many health care consumers have come to expect above average service. Since perception is usually one's reality, the customer's issues become ours. We must understand that it is not the other person's responsibility to understand our message; it is our job to be understood. About 65-75% of communication is non-verbal, according to researchers at University of Minnesota. In fact, people pay attention to what we don't say, 93% of the time. Eye contact, voice intonation, listening, clarifying, non-judgmental inferences, giving chunks of info slowly, one at a time, all contribute to effective communication. During an escalating, difficult situation with a customer, choosing to maintain a professional demeanor, while de-personalizing and developing solutions, will go a long way in successfully maintaining a fair to good customer experience.

Who are our customers?

Every person we encounter face to face, or over the phone, on a given work day, is a customer. Depending on our structure, here are some examples:

- External Customers-Patients, Physicians/office staff, Clinics, CMS (Center for Medicare & Medicaid), Auto Companies, UAW, TPTN (TheraMatrix Physical Therapy Network), various Payer Sources and Health Plans, Staffing Agencies, Auditors and Surveyors.
- Internal Customers-Colleagues, Clinicians, Supervisors, Assistants, Ancillary Staff, other Department staff, Volunteers, Billing, Corporate.

Anyone who seeks information or specific health services from us is our customer, whether internal or external. Effective communication with internal and external customers fosters favorable relationships, even through conflict resolution, and it is one of the key factors of a thriving organization. The way we handle our attitudes through customer service delivery contributes to the organizational image we portray. First, we must realize that the burden of understanding is not on the customer, it lies with us. It is our job to ask questions, to measure if what was said was understood. Ask questions: "Is there anything else you would like to review in detail?" Keeping in mind, as we explain and demonstrate, it is important to maintain the neutral tone of our voice and avoid being too condescending or edgy. Effective communication is measured on the response received. What takes precedence is what the other person hears, perceives, and understands, not just what you say!

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CONTRIBUTING ARTICLE (cont.)

The following are some tips for effective communication as it relates to the professional business world.

Non-Verbal Communication: Customers will stop listening to the content of our message, and focus on our non-verbal behavior which is a distraction from our message. They will pay more attention to our expressions of moods, thoughts, and emotions. Our tone of voice will affect how others respond to us. From emotions such as enthusiasm to anger, to irritability and patience, disinterest or apathy to caring, these are all conveyed in our communications with others.

Some examples of unfavorable non-verbal communications can be negative voice intonation; conveying obvious anger and frustration through interrupting; closed body posture; lack of eye contact and head shaking.

Image and Customer Perceptions: There are times when two people fail to communicate because, either the receiver, or messenger, is no longer listening to the message. Most people want to know first that you care, more than how much you know. When non-verbal behaviors are perceived as unfavorable, studies have shown that the receiver of the message no longer listens to the message; the focus is on the unfavorable communication. During an escalating, difficult situation with a customer, choosing to maintain a professional posture, while de-personalizing, will go a long way in successfully maintaining a fair to good customer experience.

Frustrations of a Customer: Not being given a chance to explain, or, if unable to understand, fears asking questions because of negative feedback. As a customer, the person handling their problem has an abrupt, frustrated manner, with an escalating voice level as conflict becomes heated.

Listening: Improving our listening skills can make a huge difference to having effective communication skills - people need to know that we fully understand their case. People listen and process information differently, so, it is up to us to communicate in a way that produces the results we need.

Conveying Information: When we are recording or giving information, remember that it must be precise and detailed, in a way the customer understands. After processing the customer's needs and expectations and giving them what is needed, confirm that the customer understands or demonstrates the information you have given, if you feel that they have not, try explaining it in a different way, validate retention, continue to measure.

Handling problems and complaints: When handling difficult situations or difficult customers, it is important to keep calm and not let emotions get the better of us. In many ways, a complaint is an opportunity to show we can help a customer perceive that we can deliver a better experience despite an outcome not to their liking. A customer who feels their complaint has been heard with a follow up to be done will have a strong sense of loyalty.

We can all improve in our customer service delivery whether on the phone, or face to face delivering care. While we are in the front lines of customer service, certainly an important role that is valuable to the organization, it is vital that we choose to have a positive attitude in front of the customer. This is clearly reflected in both our voices, and, in the way we behave with others. How today's knowledge workers communicate internally and externally can add or subtract to an organization's overall image and success.



“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place...” -George Bernard Shaw



HEALTH TIP — VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY

Vitamin D is required for the regulation of the minerals calcium and phosphorus found in the body. It also plays an important role in maintaining proper bone structure. Traditionally, vitamin D deficiency has been associated with rickets, a disease in which the bone tissue doesn't properly mineralize, leading to soft bones and skeletal deformities.

Symptoms and Health Risks of Vitamin D Deficiency:

Symptoms of bone pain and muscle weakness can mean you have a vitamin D deficiency. However, for many people, the symptoms are subtle. Yet even without symptoms, too little vitamin D can pose health risks. Low blood levels of the vitamin have been associated with the following:

- Increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease
- Cognitive impairment in older adults
- Severe asthma in children
- Cancer

Causes of Vitamin D Deficiency:

- **You don't consume the recommended levels of the vitamin over time.** This is likely if you follow a strict vegetarian diet, because most of the natural sources are animal-based, including fish and fish oils, egg yolks, cheese, and beef liver.
- **Your exposure to sunlight is limited.** Because the body makes vitamin D when your skin is exposed to sunlight, you may be at risk of deficiency if you are homebound, live in northern latitudes, wear long robes or head coverings for religious reasons, or have an occupation that prevents sun exposure.
- You have dark skin. The pigment melanin reduces the skin's ability to make vitamin D in response to sunlight exposure. Some studies show that older adults with darker skin are at high risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- **Your kidneys cannot convert vitamin D to its active form.** As people age their kidneys are less able to convert vitamin D to its active form, thus increasing their risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- **Your digestive tract cannot adequately absorb vitamin D.** Certain medical problems, including Crohn's disease, cystic fibrosis, and celiac disease, can affect your intestine's ability to absorb vitamin D from the food you eat.
- **You are obese.** Vitamin D is extracted from the blood by fat cells, altering its release into the circulation. People with a body mass index of 30 or greater often have low blood levels of vitamin D.

Tests for Vitamin D Deficiency:

The most accurate way to measure how much vitamin D is in your body is the 25-hydroxy vitamin D test. In the kidney, 25-hydroxy vitamin D changes into an active form of the vitamin. The normal range is 30.0 to 74.0 nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL). A lower level indicates vitamin D deficiency, which you should discuss with your doctor.

Treatment for Vitamin D Deficiency:

Treatment for vitamin D deficiency involves getting more vitamin D through diet, supplements, and/or through spending more time in the sun. Although there is no consensus on vitamin D levels required for optimal health and it likely differs depending on age and health conditions a concentration of less than 20 nanograms per milliliter is generally considered inadequate, requiring treatment.

If you don't spend much time in the sun or always are careful to cover your skin, you should speak to your doctor about taking a vitamin D supplement, particularly if you have risk factors for vitamin D deficiency.



AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FORM

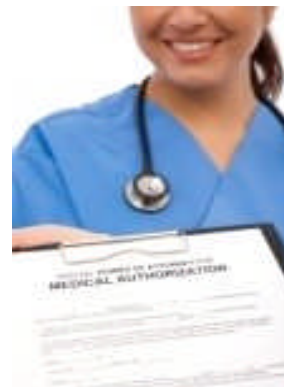
TheraMatrix Physical Therapy Network values the relationships we have with our network Providers. We strive to improve the authorization process so that our members can access needed care within our family of quality Providers. Our new Authorization Request Form has additional information to assist us in processing authorization requests.

Please remember:

- To fax the completed authorization request with documentation to be reviewed for medical necessity to (248) 333-7957.
- To request prior authorization within 48 hours of the member's date of service.
- To include documentation to be reviewed with your authorization request such as: Initial Evaluation, Re-evaluation/Plan of Care, Daily Notes, and Prescription for outpatient physical therapy.
- To provide your Tax Identification Number.
- To provide the authorization start date. We will use the date we received your authorization request if this date is not provided on the authorization form.
- If you have not heard anything from us after two business days of submitting the authorization request, please contact us to avoid any denials.

Thank you for providing the highest quality care for our members!

~ TPTN Management and Staff



TPTN REMINDERS

TPTN Authorization Phone and Fax Hours

- Monday – Thursday 8:30am – 6:30pm (EST)
- Friday 8:30am – 6:00pm (EST)
- Any messages left after hours will be returned within 24 hours.
- You may check claim status and eligibility 24 hours a day through our automated fax back process. Call 888-638-8786 and follow the prompts.
- You may send authorization requests 24 hours a day to the Utilization Review Department at 248-333-7957. All authorization requests will be responded to within 48 hours.
- Customer Service – 888-NET-TPTN (888-638-8786)
- Auth Request Fax – 248-333-7957



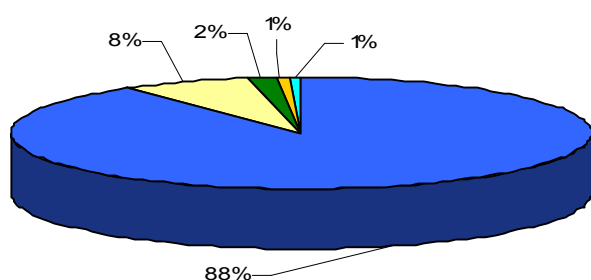
Thank you for providing the highest quality care for our members!



MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Our latest results are in!
 856 surveys were sent **NATIONALLY** to members treated from April 2011-June 2011, and our response rate was **28.1%**
Our overall satisfaction rate is 98%

Overall Satisfaction



Detail of Survey Results:

Very Satisfied	88%
Somewhat Satisfied	8%
Neutral	2%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	1%
Very Dissatisfied	1%

Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure.
 ~ George Woodberry ~

PROVIDER ACCOLADES

TPTN is appreciative of the efforts of our network providers to continuously render quality medical services to our membership. As evidenced by TPTN's outstanding customer satisfaction scores, you continue to meet and exceed our membership's expectations as it relates to their outpatient physical therapy. Below are a few member comments that were submitted during our most recent satisfaction initiative.

Sport & Spine Physical Therapy, 1 Eagle Valley Court, Broadview Hts., OH 44147 - **"Excellent!!! Can't think of a single thing to change or improve on. "If it's not broke don't fix it." Best PT experience I've ever had."**

Southeastern Physical Therapy, Inc., 1157 First Colonial Rd., Ste. 201, Virginia Beach, VA 23454 - **"Excellent staff, pleasant, just wonderful people at this facility. I would go back in a New York minute."**

Physical Therapy Group, Inc., 4233 Bardstown Rd., Suite 100-C, Louisville, KY 40218 - **"They made the therapy very worthwhile with the atmosphere and attitudes of the therapists. I was very pleased with the facility and the personnel."**

TheraMatrix Rehabilitation, 6041 15 Mile Road, Sterling Hts., MI 48312 – **"The Clinic Director is the best physical therapist I ever met. In addition, the other staff therapists were excellent as well, and I always looked forward to seeing them every time I came. Thanks to their guidance and help, the pain in my right hip is completely gone. My thanks also to the support staff who worked with me."**

Sports Rehabilitation Consultants, 5340 N. Royalton Road, North Royalton, OH 44133 – **"This is an all star staff from the top down! I brag about them to my friends. The lead therapist is the best that I have worked with. I'm scheduled next year for another surgery and I hope the therapist who treated me is still there. Thanks to all"**

Congratulations to all TPTN providers for adhering to such high standards of patient care!



HEALTH AWARENESS UPDATES

Below is a calendar of health awareness events taking place thru November 2011.
Use the contact listed to obtain materials to pass out at your facility.

September 18 - 24

National Rehabilitation Awareness Celebration

National Rehabilitation Awareness Foundation

100 Abington Executive Park

Clarks Summit, PA 18411

(800) 943-6723

(570) 341-4637

(570) 341-4331 Fax

jbrogan@allied-services.org

www.nraf-rehabnet.org



September 1 - 30

National Yoga Awareness Month

Yoga Health Foundation

P. O. Box 10072

Marina del Rey, CA 90295

(310) 928-6638

join@yogamonth.org

www.yogamonth.org



October 1 - 31

National Physical Therapy Month

American Physical Therapy Association

1111 North Fairfax Street

Alexandria, VA 22314-1488

(800) 999-2782

(703) 684-2782 x3248

(703) 706-8578 Fax

public-relations@apta.org

www.moveforwardpt.com

Move Forward.
Physical Therapy Brings Motion to Life

November 1 - 30

National Family Caregivers Month

National Family Caregivers Association

10400 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 500

Kensington, MD 20895-3944

(800) 896-3650

(301) 942-2302 Fax

info@thefamilycaregiver.org

www.thefamilycaregiver.org

SpeakUp!
National Family Caregivers Month

LOOKING for Contributing Articles from YOU!!!

- TPTN is looking to feature articles from our providers in future newsletters.
- Wouldn't you love to network your ideas with your colleagues?
- Have you found a unique way to keep authorizations up to date that you would like to share?
- Articles could contain educational tips related to patient and/or clinician interests.
- Providers and clinics featured in the newsletter will be highlighted with a short bio.
- Keep in mind that this is a national publication.
- We would also love to hear about success stories with the TPTN program or TPTN patients.
- Please submit any questions or recommendations for future "Notes" articles to: mgarmo@theramatrix.com, we welcome your feedback and appreciate your involvement in our program.

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