

# SATISFACTION

## *Success Story*

ACHIEVEMENTS WE ALL CAN LEARN FROM



### **Excellence in Day Surgery Patient Satisfaction**

#### **Caloundra Private Hospital**

Day Surgery is the fastest growing site of care in Australia and New Zealand and (particularly for the private sector) the most competitive arena in health care. A successful day surgery centre/unit must have two fundamental criteria. It must provide operative services of high quality within a communication framework driven by a commitment to customer service excellence.

#### *Because good ideas should be recognised*

Press Ganey's Success Stories and testimonials acknowledge and reward the innovative efforts of our clients who integrate their satisfaction data and Press Ganey's solutions support to produce outstanding clinical outcomes, improvements in patient perceptions, staff morale, operational efficiencies and financial performance.

We hope these experiences will enlighten and motivate individuals in all types of health care organisations.

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Day surgery was first introduced into Australia in 1982, now around 60% of all surgery is conducted in this way. Today there are 260 free standing day surgery centres in Australia and they continue to be built. Day surgery is widely available in over 320 private hospitals and most larger public hospitals now have dedicated day surgery units in place.

In such a crowded marketplace, standing out as a provider of choice requires special efforts at customer service, as the staff at Caloundra Private Hospital understand. The day surgery unit of the hospital, part of the Ramsay Health Care Group, is dedicated to giving each of its patients the best care from start to finish. Caloundra Private understands that satisfied patients are more likely to continue to use a facility and refer it to friends and family if they receive first-rate service on the day of surgery as well as pre and post-op.

Caloundra Private has sustained its position at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in the Press Ganey national database over the past three years. It has achieved this extraordinary feat by being “hyper-committed” to service excellence.

## Pre-Op

Understanding that patients may have many questions leading up to the day of the procedure, Caloundra Private ensures that each day surgery patient receives pre-surgery welcome information that addresses many common patient concerns. On the day of surgery, pre-surgery nurses complete a thorough assessment and instruct patients on what to expect.

Many Press Ganey clients pre-register patients over the phone, minimising — or even eliminating — the time spent at the registration desk on the day of the procedure. Ensuring that patients have clear directions to the facility can also ease anxiety. Include a map of the location of the unit in patients’ pre-registration packets. Clearly marked walkways and directional signs at the facility are also very helpful.

Sarah Dennien, Clinical Nurse of Day Surgery at Caloundra Private, says that open and continuous communication with patients is essential. “(patients respond to) friendly, helpful service,” she says. “We conduct ourselves professionally and compassionately. We provide updates on wait times and apologise when needed. We implement service recovery and hardware for consistency. These behaviours show that we put our patients first.”

## The Big Day

Two of the top five items on Press Ganey’s 2009 National Day Surgery Priority Index are: “comfort of the admission waiting area” and “Information provided about delays.” Both of these items are easily addressed and can make a big difference in patients’ perception of a facility.

Patients should arrive to a pleasant, clean waiting area. Provide plenty of adequately spaced, comfortable seating for patients and their accompanying family or friends.

Ensure that scheduling procedures are in place so that patients do not spend a long time waiting — long wait times can increase patient anxiety and decrease patient satisfaction. If there is a situation that will cause a delay in the patient’s scheduled surgery, manage the patient’s expectations of how long the wait will be. Even over-estimate the delay time if you are not sure how long it will be. Continue to update the patient throughout the delay.

According to Judy Halstead (Clinical Nurse), communication is the key to patient satisfaction in the day surgery setting. Although patients should have already received information explaining their procedure, make sure that nurses and staff explain what they are doing, how long it will take and why they are doing it.

Some patients are too anxious to be able to remember everything that they’ve been told or read about the procedure. It is very important to keep them informed at each step. Even though the surgeon has explained the procedure to patients during a prior practice visit, many day surgery centres also ask doctors to meet with the patient on the day of surgery to restate what is going to happen before, during and after surgery.

When communicating with the patient, everyone on staff should encourage questions from patients and anyone accompanying them to the procedure. Effective communication skills of doctors and staff are an important part of the patient’s perception of the experience and should be a part of the Day Centre’s customer service program.





*Day Surgery Reception*

## Post-Op

“Instructions the nurse gave you about caring for yourself at home” is another key item on the National Day Surgery Priority Index. Receiving a big stack of instructional documents to go through at home can be overwhelming to the patient. Although written instructions are necessary, talk to the patient before the procedure about what to expect post-op. The discussion should include:

- Information about any necessary medical equipment, as well as how to change bandages and check for signs of infection, etc.
- An offer to call in any necessary prescriptions to the patient's preferred pharmacy.
- Contact information for any questions that may arise, including an after-hours number.
- Scheduling the patient's follow-up visit with the doctor.
- Advising the patient what to do if there is pain, what to do if pain gets worse or lasts more than a given length of time.
- An overview of what the patient can expect to happen or how he/ she might feel after being discharged (physically and emotionally).
- Letting the patient know to expect a follow-up phone call. Ensure that procedures are in place so that all follow-up calls are made in a timely manner.
- Opportunities for the patient and caregivers to ask questions.

Todd Mimnaw (Perioperative Manager) notes: 'Caloundra Private allows the patient's family members to be with the patient during both pre- and post-op to comfort the patient and help the family feel more informed and active in the patient's care.'

## Conclusion

All touch points (moments of truth) with the patient are important. Staff must give each patient excellent care and respect from the time the appointment is scheduled until the follow-up appointment is completed.

Providing excellent customer service consistently is a challenge for any organisation, says Di Slater, Quality Manager. A few things organisations can do:

- Establish and educate staff on customer service standards and expectations (such as involving the patient and their family in decisions).
- Ensure all areas of the organisation are held accountable for adherence to the standards.
- Consistently monitor and report results and trends in order to correct areas with negative trends.

Employing staff members and engaging doctors who are dedicated to service excellence makes all the difference. “Our partners are totally engaged in everything that we do at Caloundra Private Hospital,” Louisa Marshall, CEO says. “We know that being engaged in our culture makes a huge difference in the way our patients perceive their care experience. It also makes our day-to-day interaction with our co-workers the very best it can be.

Our success comes from believing in our vision; putting our patients first; achieving results through ownership, accountability, teamwork, courtesy, honesty and respect; and striving to be better tomorrow. Complacency is not an option.”

Caloundra Private Hospital has reaped the benefits of this philosophy — with sustained patient loyalty and continued rankings at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for patient satisfaction, service excellence and quality of care — something every day surgery centre can emulate.



*Caloundra Private Hospital Day Surgery Entrance*