



Effective Health Care

Effectiveness of Patient Advocates in Healthcare Settings Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Although the topic, *Effectiveness of Patient Advocates in Healthcare Settings*, is important, it is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.
- *Effectiveness of Patient Advocates in Healthcare Settings* could potentially be considered for new research in comparative effectiveness.

Topic Description

Nominator(s): Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in understanding the effectiveness of patient advocates in outpatient and inpatient health care settings. In particular, he/she is interested in the effectiveness of patient advocacy programs for individuals with multiple co-morbidities and for elderly populations.

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Population(s): Individuals seeking care in outpatient and inpatient settings, individuals with multiple co-morbidities and/or cancer, elderly populations

Intervention(s): Patient advocacy

Comparator(s): Usual care

Outcome(s): Patient satisfaction, quality of life, improvement of symptoms, improvement in health outcomes

Key Questions from Nominator: What is the effectiveness of patient advocates in outpatient and inpatient health care settings?

Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Medical care for individuals with chronic illness and multiple co-morbidities is often complex as patients require multiple treatments and providers. One potential strategy for improving care is to develop programs that improve care coordination and patient satisfaction. Patient advocacy is a concept that generally refers to efforts to support patients and their interests within the context of the health care

system. A specific For the purposes of this topic, a patient advocate was defined as a lay worker that evaluates patient needs, works to overcome problems with access to clinical services, and serves as a liaison between the healthcare provider and the patient to resolve complaints and grievances.

- A search of the literature identified few studies that have been conducted on the effectiveness of patient advocates in outpatient and inpatient health care settings. Therefore, this topic is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.

- An organization that may provide useful information on patient advocacy is the Patient Advocate Foundation at <http://www.patientadvocate.org/>.