
What is the difference between first and third-party feedback?

Healthcare professionals may see differences in the data provided by surveys conducted by PRC and the data they collect internally. The same patients seemingly providing different responses can be confusing and difficult to reconcile. While differences can certainly exist between data collected by internal and external methods, the information collected by these different means is more similar than you may initially believe.

If you look at your internally-collected data and see that the vast majority of patients are giving positive responses with many of the responses “Excellent,” and only a handful of patients are offering negative responses, this data is probably very similar to the data PRC collects for you. Because PRC tabulates and displays your Percent Excellent scores (as this is the most valuable score to improve in generating loyalty patients), it is easy to assume that everyone who does not rate you as excellent is dissatisfied. In fact, when a person does not rate their care excellent, he or she most likely rates it positively, either very good or good.

However, differences between the two data may still exist. If this is the case, consider the impact the collection processes may have on the information gathered.

People are far more likely to express their true feelings to an unbiased third-party rather than to their caregiver, which is why it is important to reflect on the data collection protocol. Your patients are likely not lying to you, but they may shade their true feelings. Some may not want to offend their caregivers or get them in trouble; some may not like confrontation; some may fear that responding honestly will impact their care. While we know that these fears are groundless – no one would provide substandard care in response to less-than-stellar patient comments – they may be very real concerns for your patients. Anonymity provides patients an opportunity to be candid, which, in turn, provides you with quality information from which to improve.

Third-party data is also appropriately timed so that patients don't feel as vulnerable. Timing plays a key role in gathering unbiased patient perceptions. PRC's surveys are timed to provide the patients an opportunity to return to their normal routine, yet not so long that they forget the specifics of their care. This allows patients to lose that sense of vulnerability and fear that often accompanies healthcare encounters and gain perspective on their experience.

