

# RWJBarnabas Health Patient and Family Advisory Council



## An Overview

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## Outline

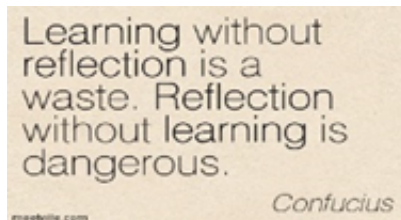
- I. The Importance of Reflection, from John F. Bonamo, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical and Quality Officer, RWJBarnabas Health
  
- II. RWJBarnabas Health System Overview
  - a. System
  - b. High Reliability Organization (HRO)
  
- III. Purpose and Journey of our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC)
  - a. Benefits
  
- IV. Expectations/Goals
  
- V. Accomplishments
  
- VI. What's Next?
  
- VII. Photo Memories

## I. The Importance of Reflection

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Dear Reader,

Collaborating with patients and their loved ones assists RWJBarnabas Health in continuing to deliver the highest standard of safe, cost-effective, quality care. Working with patients and their loved ones and involving them directly in planning, program development and facility design, as well as the decision-making process, is intended to enhance the patient experience, increase satisfaction and lead to improved clinical outcomes at each RWJBarnabas Health facility. Developing and implementing Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFACs) across our system has been an effective step in cultivating these longstanding, respectful relationships to further advance patient- and family-centered care.



Within healthcare, reflection has great power. It is an active process of reviewing, evaluating and analyzing compelling experiences upon previous learning to draw up, recharge and renew our next steps.

People who take time to reflect and celebrate their successes are more optimistic; they take better care of themselves, experience increased wellbeing and tend to be less stressed. Celebrating success enables teams to learn more about each other, and learn how the relationships have grown over time.

So, it is the purpose of this report to take the time to celebrate the successes of our PFACs across all of the RWJBarnabas Health sites. It is an honor to have our PFAC members as partners in care, for they represent the "Voice of the Patient" as we collaboratively make decisions and improvements that impact our patients and their loved ones. An example of this is represented in enhanced wayfinding maps and signage for our patients and their loved ones to navigate from the parking lot to the various specialties within the walls of our hospital.

The scope of PFAC members' contributions demonstrates the usefulness of patient and family engagement as a valuable resource for improving the patient experience at RWJBH. Our PFAC members at RWJBH are continually joining task forces, taking part in patient education and assisting in pilot projects prior to their implementation. The PFACs are our trusted advisors and key partners in ultimately making and keeping our communities healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Bonamo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John F. Bonamo, MD, MS, FACOG, FACPE

Executive Vice President and Chief Medical and Quality Officer

RWJBarnabas Health

## II. RWJBarnabas Health System Overview

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RWJBarnabas Health is the most comprehensive healthcare system in New Jersey with a service area that covers nine counties and five million residents. The system also ranks among the state's largest private employers—and has a medical staff that represents 40 percent of New Jersey's practicing physicians. RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, through their public-private partnership, are jointly developing and operating a world-class academic health system. RWJBarnabas Health is comprised of 11 acute care hospitals (including five teaching hospitals and an academic medical center), three children's hospitals, a nationally renowned pediatric rehabilitation hospital and its network of outpatient centers, a free-standing behavioral health center and the state's largest behavioral health network, a satellite emergency department, trauma centers, ambulatory care centers, comprehensive hospice and home care programs, medical groups with primary and specialty care physician practices, a clinically integrated network, an accountable care organization, and multiple-site radiology and pharmacy services.

RWJBarnabas Health is recognized as a top employer by *Modern Healthcare*, *Forbes*, *NJ Advance Media* and *Beckers Healthcare*. Our hospitals, programs and services have earned countless awards in their fields, including the Equity of Care Award as top hospital for healthcare diversity and inclusion from the American Hospital Association, and the prestigious Magnet designation for nursing excellence. Additionally, our hospitals receive high excellence, quality and safety scores from nationally-respected organizations, including the Leapfrog Group and *US News & World Report*.

Through its Social Impact and Community Investment practice, RWJBarnabas Health is leveraging its position as an Anchor Institution, one that is physically entrenched in our communities, as a critical economic engine and committed community partner to address the social determinants of health, including economic stability (job opportunities and living wages), education, access to healthy food, affordable housing, and safe living and neighborhood environments. By financially investing in communities across the state and launching initiatives to impact vulnerable communities, the system is constantly working to improve the long-term wellbeing of the communities it serves.

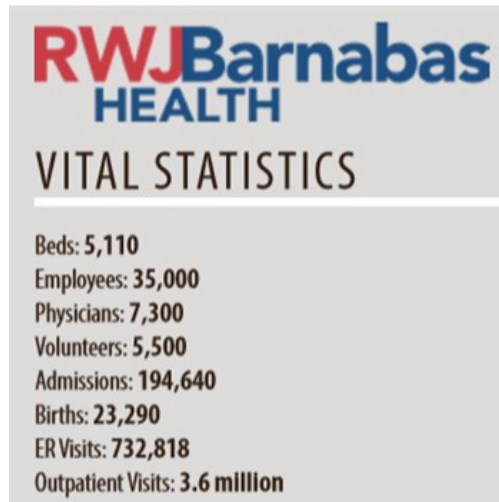
System-wide, RWJBarnabas Health is on a journey to become a high reliability organization (HRO), using best practices from industries such as nuclear power, aviation and manufacturing. All physicians, managers and employees are being trained in robust HRO practices. Hospitals throughout RWJBarnabas Health are nationally renowned in leading medical and health services, including a Renal Transplant division at Saint Barnabas Medical Center that ranks among the largest in the nation for Living Donor Transplants and Kidney Transplant programs.

Also renowned: the highly advanced chronic pain service at Children's Specialized Hospital that is being modeled across the country; the Heart Transplant program at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center that is one of only a handful of programs nationally to have successfully transplanted nearly 1,100 hearts; the state's only Lung Transplant Program at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center; and at Saint Barnabas, NJ's only state-certified Burn Center. Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital New Brunswick is the flagship cancer hospital of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and the principal teaching hospital of Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; RWJUH New Brunswick is also home to a Level 1 Trauma Center and the first Pediatric Trauma Center in the state. Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state's only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center.

And, RWJBarnabas Health is the official healthcare provider of the New Jersey Devils, Rutgers University Athletics, Seton Hall University Athletics, Princeton University Athletics, Monmouth University Athletics and the Somerset Patriots.

## II. RWJBarnabas Health System Overview

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### High Reliability Organization

At RWJBarnabas Health, we are on a continuous journey to become a high reliability organization (HRO), uniting our health system in a culture of safety to achieve top-tier clinical outcomes and to deliver the highest quality care and safest experience for our patients, communities and workforce.

High reliability means combining the most efficient people, processes, protocols, policies, structures, technologies and environment to achieve top-tier outcomes across RWJBH and to deliver the highest quality care and safest experience for our patients, communities and workforce.

This HRO quest, which we refer to as “Safety Together,” is a comprehensive process to improve our reliability, building upon our past successes in safety, quality and patient experience while using advanced tools and behaviors to ensure the overall physical and emotional health of our patients and the communities we serve.

RWJBarnabas Health is advancing innovative strategies in high quality patient care, education and research to address both the clinical and social determinants of health. Creating and sustaining healthy communities through our Safety Together Journey: Speak up for safety, Accurately communicate, Focus on the task, Exercise and accept a questioning attitude, Thoughtfully interact, and You and me together. Our PFAC members have participated in our Safety Together course, as well as staff, including physicians.

### III. Purpose and Journey of the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC)

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PFACs are a proven approach for healthcare organizations to form a partnership that improves patient and family experience. For that, the healthcare organizations have embraced PFACs to learn from their patients' diverse perspectives and firsthand experiences, and integrate their ideas into service delivery and quality improvement efforts. This approach can positively impact care and assist with strengthening the delivery of patient- and family-centered care. PFAC often plays a key role in implementing plans to change.

The various RWJBarnabas Health PFAC members connect the patients and families with medical staff, clinicians and administrators as partners to improve the delivery of care. PFAC allows families to have direct impact on the coordination of care while offering the perspective of the patient and family member. The board promotes a culture of patient- and family-centered care and helps to improve programs, services and policies within the organization.

The mission of each RWJBarnabas Health PFAC is to collaborate with leadership and staff to empower advisory members to provide input for organizational policies and practices. The Councils support the organization's mission of "Creating Healthy Communities" and promote patient- and family-centered care by putting the patient and family at the center of all activities.

The term "patient- and family-centered care" emphasizes collaboration with patients and families of all ages, at all levels of care and in all healthcare settings. Families are essential to patients' health and wellbeing, and are necessary partners for quality and safety improvements within the healthcare system.

Across RWJBarnabas Health, our PFACs have and continue to:

- Cultivate respectful, welcoming partnerships between patients, families, leadership and staff
- Encourage collaboration between families and providers of patient care
- Strengthen communication between patients, families, leadership and staff
- Channel information and concerns from patients and families to organizational leadership
- Offer effective solutions to patient and family concerns
- Provide education and training that fosters an increased understanding of the patient- and family-centered care values throughout the organization and community
- Provide input for clinical programs to meet patient and family needs
- Provide recommendations on operational issues that affect patients and families

#### **The PFAC Journey at RWJBarnabas Health**

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In 2018, an RWJBarnabas Health system-wide goal called for all hospitals to have an established PFAC. Council membership had to comprise of patients and their immediate and extended family members from diverse backgrounds who have received hospital medical services within the past two years. The ratio of patient and family to staff had to be at least 3:1, and the staff makeup needed to be a representation of different levels of staff from clinical and non-clinical service areas with a Patient Experience and/or Nurse leader co-leading the meeting in conjunction with a PFAC representative. Since each site's Council's establishment, there has been ongoing recruitment held.

Within the system, PFAC members serve on quality committees and assist in conducting patient rounds. Many of our PFAC members are also hospital volunteers who spent a good portion of their time focusing their attention on patient education and medication side effects. The members were imperative in implementing the hand hygiene task force and executing the AIDET (Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation, Thank you) badge buddy initiative.

## IV. Expectations and Goals of RWJBarnabas Health's PFACs

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There are a number of goals that the PFACs of RWJBarnabas strive to accomplish. The various Councils' goals include ongoing encouragement of a more patient-centered delivery of care by improving patient satisfaction and working with staff to improve services that affect patients and family members. The system's Councils also strive to improve the quality and safety of care within the system by providing information about the concerns and needs of patients and their loved ones along with staff members by rounding. For instance, some PFAC members conduct observational rounds that are focused on handwashing to capture data, and some members of our PFAC are involved in auditing compliance with patient falls. The data is then shared with the appropriate Committees such as the Handwashing Committee and/or the Patient Falls Committee.

In 2019, one goal of PFACs across the system was to screen, orient and place two PFAC members on at least one Quality and/or Safety Committee at each hospital. As a result, here are the various committees that our PFAC members across the RWJBH system serve on:

- Bioethics Committee
- LGBTQ Business Group
- Quality Board Committee
- Infection Control Committee
- Patient Falls Committee
- Safety Committee
- Performance Improvement Committee
- Hospital Board
- Patient Experience and Safety Rounding Committee
- Pre-BMT Transplant Education
- Pediatric Committee
- Multidisciplinary NICU Committee
- Palliative Care Committee
- Hand Hygiene Task Force

## V. Accomplishments of PFAC

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Input from our patients and their loved ones through our PFAC members, directly and/or through the comments from surveys that are collectively reviewed, is so valuable. We utilize this “Voice of the Patient” valuable information to make improvements that ultimately provide a better experience for our patients and their loved ones. Quite a few of these accomplishments are listed here as per the hard work of the various PFACs throughout RWJBarnabas Health. For example, Council members within the system helped improve patient discharge times by participating in a process improvement event – cutting down the discharge time by 30 minutes. Members also assisted in the development of ICU, NICU and Pediatric brochures as well as aided in testing the central scheduling app to make sure it was conducive to patient use. We hear our patients’ voices, and we take action together.

Along with the aforementioned PFAC accomplishments, members provided recommendations on how to increase patient response rates on the surveys we disseminate. Council members provided feedback into our inpatient and outpatient guides and even assisted with facilitating the awareness back to our staff. Here are some additional accomplishments:

<b>Co-developed and updated PFAC websites</b>	<b>Participated in environment of care rounds</b>	<b>Revised Communication boards found in patient rooms</b>	<b>Provided insights into visitation hours</b>
<b>Developed and presented workshops for families</b>	<b>Visited patients and their loved ones in the waiting rooms and in their rooms</b>	<b>Developed an Employee Rounding Tool</b>	<b>Supported the Farmers’ Market and all healthy initiatives</b>
<b>Participated in RN orientation</b>	<b>Provided feedback on Patient Fall signage and sign placement</b>	<b>Co-designed an expectations YouTube video for ambulatory patients</b>	<b>Launched and distributed patient education information for Operating Room</b>
<b>Implemented “Welcome Bags,” including scent cloths made by a PFAC member and books so parents can read to NICU babies</b>	<b>Began monthly sibling program and music therapy in NICU</b>	<b>Developed and provided “Power of Language” module focused on communication with families to staff</b>	<b>Hosted monthly NICU family pizza nights to support parents</b>

Additionally, PFAC members at one site developed informational and safety videos for staff on “How our Families Partner with Staff in Safety Together,” which can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sY0SZld2yts&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMqQp1sybAI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jllB0wz164s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJPO54mgado>

The above accomplishments benefit our patients and staff. Being a PFAC member also has intrinsic benefits back to the members directly as stated here by a PFAC member: “As a PFAC member, I have gained a new appreciation for the operation of the hospital and how the community can help make the patient experience even better. Prior to this, I would send back the patient survey and never know if my comments were addressed. Now I know the hospital administration and PFAC members are listening and working on issues that affect all of us. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to be a member of PFAC.”



## VI. What's Next?

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Pre-COVID-19 goals for RWJBarnabas Health PFACs in 2020 involved the expansion of council members onto other Quality and Safety committees as well as more members conducting rounding by utilizing AHRQ and Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care for reference and guidelines. The council would also like to consider the standardization of best practice models at each site, such as the handwashing initiative. Additionally, specialty PFAC boards such as a specific Cancer Institute, a Spanish-speaking Council, and/or NICU Patient and Family Advisory Councils will be considered. Further focus will remain on recruitment, retention and reputation (having PFAC members attend community-related events on behalf of RWJBarnabas Health). Finally, a survey capturing quantitative and qualitative data will be developed and then disseminated to the PFAC representatives at each site in order to gauge what is working well and what needs to be improved, and to capture best practices and accomplishments for future reports.

Despite COVID-19, we had PFAC representation across each of our sites that participated on a biweekly call with Epic, our vendor of choice to assist with implementation plans of our new Electronic Health Record (to be implemented in 2021 with a staggered rollout across the RWJBH system over the next few years). PFAC members have assisted with key Epic decisions such as providing input into the marketing plan for MyChart, the patient portal. Additionally, community outreach will continue to take place to ensure our communities are informed about the latest updates regarding COVID-19.

## VII. Photo Memories

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**PFAC at Saint Barnabas Medical Center**

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**PFAC at Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus**

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**PFAC at RWJUH Hamilton**

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## THANK YOU!

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If you have any questions regarding this report or know someone who is interested in possibly becoming a PFAC member, please contact Jill Anderson, Corporate Vice President, Patient Experience at RWJBarnabas Health, at [jill.anderson@rwjbh.org](mailto:jill.anderson@rwjbh.org) or call 609-503-1747.

