

SOP Template: Process for Addressing Patient Questions and Concerns

This SOP details the **process for addressing patient questions and concerns**, including receiving and documenting inquiries, timely communication protocols, providing accurate and empathetic responses, escalation procedures for complex issues, follow-up actions to ensure resolution, and maintaining patient confidentiality throughout the process. The goal is to enhance patient satisfaction and trust by ensuring all questions and concerns are handled efficiently and professionally.

1. Purpose

To provide a standardized process for receiving, documenting, responding to, and resolving patient questions and concerns in a timely, accurate, and confidential manner.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff members interacting with patients, including but not limited to administrative, nursing, and clinical staff.

3. Responsibilities

- **All Staff:** Receive inquiries, document appropriately, provide initial response, and escalate as needed.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Oversee escalation and resolution of complex concerns.
- **Privacy Officer:** Ensure patient confidentiality is maintained at all stages.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Inquiry	Any question, comment, or concern raised by a patient regarding their care or service experience.
Escalation	The process of referring a complex issue to higher-level staff or management for further review and resolution.
Confidentiality	Ensuring patient information is only shared with authorized personnel in accordance with relevant privacy laws and policies.

5. Procedures

- 1. Receiving Inquiries**
 - Accept patient questions or concerns via in-person, phone, email, or portal.
 - Listen attentively and express empathy.
 - Confirm understanding by summarizing the concern back to the patient.
- 2. Documenting Inquiries**
 - Log all inquiries into the designated system or form promptly.
 - Include date, time, patient details, inquiry description, and staff member's name.
- 3. Timely Communication Protocols**
 - Acknowledge receipt of inquiry within 24 hours.
 - Provide an estimated timeline for resolution, if possible.
- 4. Providing Responses**
 - Ensure responses are accurate, clear, and empathetic.
 - Use approved resources and confirm information with appropriate departments as needed.
- 5. Escalation Procedures**
 - Refer complex, unresolved, or sensitive concerns to the supervisor or manager.
 - Document the reason for escalation and actions taken.
- 6. Follow-Up Actions**
 - Confirm resolution with the patient and document the outcome.
 - If unresolved, communicate further steps and anticipated timelines.
 - Close the inquiry in the system upon resolution.
- 7. Maintaining Confidentiality**
 - Adhere to HIPAA and internal privacy policies at all times.
 - Only share patient information with authorized personnel.

6. Documentation

- Inquiry Log/Form
- Communication Records
- Escalation and Resolution Notes

7. Related Policies

- Patient Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Grievance and Complaints Procedure

8. Review and Revision

This SOP will be reviewed annually or as needed in response to regulatory or procedural changes.