

Powerful Patient 2009, week 33

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Creating Partnership with your Physician

Healthcare is changing – Fast! The way we do business is being shaken to its foundation. The only certainty is this: When the proverbial dust clears, only the best organizations in the industry will be left standing. It's the Age of Healthcare Performance. Healthcare organizations are being challenged to engage physicians in measurable performance. Patients need to do the same.

1) About our Guest

Dr. Stephen Beeson is a primary care physician and “physician champion” at the Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group in San Diego, California. Dr. Beeson was selected by Sharp HealthCare Leadership to serve as the “physician fire starter” for the Sharp Experience, an organizational commitment to service and operational excellence. Dr. Beeson's patient satisfaction ranks him in the 99th percentile nation wide, and the San Diego County Medical Society voted him as one of San Diego's Best Physicians in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008.



Stephen C. Beeson, M.D.

The Sharp Healthcare system has won awards for organizational performance, and is considered the best healthcare practice in California.

2) About Partnering with your Physician

Dr. Beeson trains physicians in California and throughout the country in ways to improve patient satisfaction. He has written two books:

- Practicing Excellence, a Physicians' Manual to Exceptional Health Care
- Engaging Physicians: A Manual to physician partnership

While these books are written from the perspective of the physician and the healthcare organization, there are good tidbits for patients as well.

Patient satisfaction tends to be highest when the patient feels the doctor cares about them as a person, apart from “a kidney” or a particular complaint, and when they feel the doctor has listened to their full story. Similarly, doctor satisfaction is highest when they feel the patient is

listening to the doctor and participating in his or her own care. This implies that patients should ask all their questions, and make sure they understand the recommendation of the physician. If they have concerns or misgivings about the advice, they should talk about it with the doctor, not just silently veto the recommendation.

Healthcare requires partnership among the patient, the physician, and the organization (hospital or medical practice). Until all three of those are fully engaged and working well together, we will not make the progress we need to make in truly reforming healthcare.