

# BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS

2019

## **Patient and family-centred care**

St. Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health Team

### **Applying methods of citizen engagement in primary care**

**St. Michael's**

Inspired Care.  
Inspiring Science.

Academic Family  
Health Team

St. Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health Team has developed an affordable, accessible method of patient and community engagement that can be an alternative or adjunct to a citizen/patient advisory committee. It has resulted in tangible improvements in patient care, as well as become an internationally acclaimed model.

The team believes that “many primary care teams want to do more to engage patients in program and service delivery but find it challenging because of lack of expertise, lack of time, and lack of resources.” They were interested in improving the typical medical visit and their approach has been to talk to strategically chosen community members directly about their needs and whether they are being met.

The team emailed invitations to 10,000 patients inviting them to spend a day with the FHT offering suggestions about the typical medical visit and chose 36 volunteers randomly, but proportionately, according to their patient demographics (e.g., gender, housing status).

On the morning of the participation day, the team educated the patients about their operations and asked them, in small groups, to identify areas for improvement in a typical medical visit. Their feedback allowed team members registering to get patient recommendations in five areas identified as needing improvement: 1) booking an appointment, 2) waiting for the appointment, 3) working with residents and staff during the visit, 4) following up on referrals and tests and 5) urgent care.

# BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS

2019

The team assessed the recommendations and determined which of them they could realistically do within a two-year period. The team has implemented a number of patient suggestions, including improvements in the waiting room such as:

- Gender neutral bathrooms;
- A rainbow flag;
- Signs informing patients how to log into the WIFI network; and
- Better use of the waiting room TVs.

Other beneficial changes include:

- Email appointment booking;
- “MyChart” system so patients can review charts;
- Educational pamphlets about residents; and
- Streamlined after hours phone access

The volunteers not chosen for the day are now part of a patient pool that the team can turn to for input and feedback on various care issues, providing fresh, diverse perspectives.

Their work has received acclaim, locally, nationally and internationally, and the team has both written and spoken about their unique approach to healthcare audiences.

## Key Facts:

- Developed a low-cost, accessible method of patient and community engagement
- Model is internationally acclaimed
- Resulted in tangible improvements to patient care
- Established patient pool for diverse, fresh viewpoints
- Involving patients in development of many more improvements and offerings (principles of co-design are modelled)