

Stewardship of Patient Resources

Essential Behaviors to Improve the Patient Experience

Q. In the last 3 months, did you and anyone on your health care team talk about how much your prescription medicines cost?

- **Emphasize the importance of a patient’s medications to him or her**, including the benefit of the medication, how it improves the patient’s health and possible consequences of not using the medication properly. Higher out-of-pocket costs can cause the patient to abandon the recommended treatment regimens and not take medications as prescribed.
- **Use consistent language when talking about prices.** “Charge” in the health care environment is different from “cost.” To patients, “cost” is the amount payable out of pocket; make sure all staff members are using the same words.
- **Recognize patients may be embarrassed about challenges with payment.** Use empathic language when discussing payment. For example, “I can see this is difficult to discuss, but we will review your options.”