

**Capturing Patients' Experiences at the Touch of a Button**

**Organisation**

Afrox Healthcare Private Hospital Group

**Industry**

Private Healthcare

**Country**

South Africa

**Products and Services**

Patient Feedback System

**Key Benefits**

Administration costs & time delays that were associated with previous manual data gathering processes have been entirely eliminated

Decision makers are constantly in touch with patient feedback and satisfaction scores

A culture has been created where patient care is "top of mind"

Individual Wards and Units can now be held accountable for patient satisfaction levels which are benchmarked across units, hospitals & regions within the Aprox Group

Overall patient satisfaction indicators have improved due to faster and more proactive problem identification and resolution

**Afrox's Challenge before CFS...**

Afrox Healthcare Limited had always attempted to measure the satisfaction of patients through the use of complex paper-based surveys. This proved to be time consuming, complex and expensive.

Data capturing was a difficult process and by the time patient feedback results were available, they tended to be inadequate and outdated.

Questionnaires were also changed from one hospital to the next, which made it almost impossible to make meaningful comparisons for benchmarking purposes between hospitals and wards.

As a result of this, Continuous Improvement, which is a cornerstone of Aprox's TQM process, proved to be increasingly difficult to monitor and manage.

*"At last Aprox Healthcare Limited has found a sustainable system and process for capturing, reporting and taking action to improve Patient Care".*

**Mike Flemming  
Managing Director  
Aprox Healthcare**

**Key Business Requirements...**

One of the group's major considerations was the impact that a new patient feedback system would have on their business objectives.

These are:

- The enhancement of nursing quality as a focus area
- The elevation of all medical standards and procedures to best of breed practice
- To strive for the maintenance of world-class quality standards at all its hospital facilities for the benefit of all stakeholders
- To ensure the group is committed and actively works towards the process of Total Quality Healthcare Management (TQHM).

**Where Does Aprox Healthcare use the Patient Feedback System?**

The system is currently used in all fifty two of the group's hospitals throughout South Africa. Over five hundred feedback pads, in various configurations, are currently in use.

The feedback pads form part of Aprox's nursing intervention program that is aimed at improving patient care in all areas of the group's hospitals.

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Feedback pads are used to collect feedback from a range of departmental units and results are delivered to managers via email on a daily and weekly basis.

The flexible nature of the pads means feedback is now collected from all patient touchpoints, including General Wards, Specialised Units, Outpatient Units, Theatres and Reception areas.

**How do patients use the feedback pads?**

*In wards...*

Patients answer questions on pads at their bedside before being discharged.

*At reception...*

Patients answer questions relating to their experience while admissions or discharge officers are processing documentation.

*In Specialised Units...*

Patients or family members key in responses to questions when prompted by nursing staff.

**What do staff do with the results from the system?**

Each Ward or Unit has an A1 poster that is updated weekly by the Ward/Unit Manager.

Results are discussed as part of a weekly feedback meeting. Scores are

analysed and staff are actively involved in developing action plans to maintain or improve patient satisfaction.

As a result of this consultative process, staff are constantly aware of the key issues affecting patient satisfaction and also feel that they are included in the service improvement process.

**How has the CFS system been integrated into Afox's Nursing Framework?**

Afrox Healthcare Limited has created a Nursing Framework for developing, implementing & sustaining qualitative & quantitative integrated standards & measures for the entire nursing function.

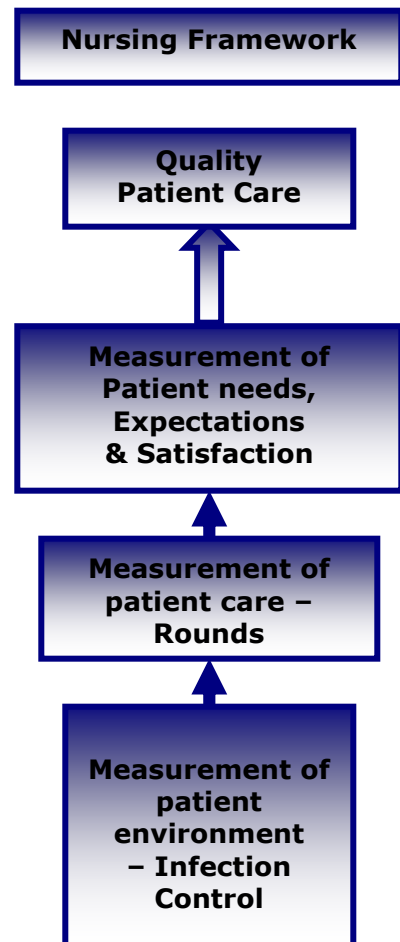
The Nursing Framework has three main focus areas, namely -

1. Nursing Contribution to Profit
2. Optimal Staff Utilisation
3. Quality Patient Care

Quality Patient Care is assessed in three main ways -

1. By measuring patient needs, expectations & satisfaction using the Patient Feedback Pads
2. By measuring the patient environment,

- with an emphasis on infection control
3. By measuring patient care – via qualitative surveys conducted randomly in each Ward/specialised unit (Nursing Care Plan)



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### **What Impact did the Patient Feedback System have on Afrox's Business Objectives?**

The advantages of the Patient Feedback System were immense and significant benefits were immediately realised.

The patient feedback system has proven to be user friendly and very easy for patients to use and has helped Afrox achieve one of its primary goals of long term cost reduction and process efficiency.

Further business benefits included –

- Due to the electronic data capture facility of the system, nurses and doctors now have real-time access to patient

feedback as and when they need it.

- Afrox has been able to set, and manage, benchmarks for patient care across multiple locations and sites
- The highly flexible nature of the system has seen its introduction into numerous functional areas. Typically, the system is used to gather feedback in all public and private wards, specialized treatment units, outpatient centres, operating theatres and at patient admission and discharge desks.
- The CFS system has been very effective in highlighting training needs and is used to recognize and reward

outstanding staff performance

- Staff morale has improved significantly as the system has proven to be a more valid and trustworthy method of collecting patient feedback than other methods used in the past
- The system provides objective, reliable information to enable management teams to make informed strategic management decisions, and to track the impact of these initiatives over time.

*The net result is that the group now uses the CFS system as the core measure of patient care and satisfaction.*

### View from the Coalface

#### **How the Customer Feedback System helps Afrox Healthcare Limited to Deliver Quality Care to its Patients**

*"Afrox Healthcare Limited is committed to quality patient care. Quality measures are used to benchmark the performance of each unit and all hospitals, as part of performance management outputs. Customer feedback has always been a priority for Afrox Healthcare Limited.*

*In the past, various attempts were made to standardize feedback from patients and great effort was put into hospital specific and group questionnaires. The systems were complex & mainly driven manually. Benchmarking was not possible due to hospital specific measures. Afrox Healthcare Limited standardised on the CFS system in 2002 for high level benchmarking and implemented the system in all the main hospitals within a six-month period.*

*The system allows for daily online report availability. Regional and group reports can be generated for benchmarking purposes. The Nursing function has integrated the Patient Satisfaction Feedback System with the Quality leg of the nursing framework - it is used as THE measure for patient satisfaction."*

**Susan le Roux: Nursing Information Support Specialist**