

Another View: Healthgrades

By Contributor

By Wendy Thomas

It's been said that news of bad customer service reaches twice as many ears as praise for good service. And when it comes to health care— the most personal type of service there is – people are quick to share their dissatisfaction. And perceptions can linger.

As a long-term resident, I know that people in El Dorado County have their opinions about our local healthcare provider, Marshall Medical Center. There are those who are staunch critics, and those who will defend Marshall to the end. I joined the Marshall board of directors 7 years ago, and I've had the opportunity to see the challenges and triumphs for myself.

About two years ago, Marshall made a top-down commitment to base all decisions on the **patient's needs**, even if it means inconvenience for staff or doctors or changing up processes. This may sound like a no-brainer, but many hospitals (and businesses) function based on what's easiest for them or what would make the doctors happy. This agreement to focus on the patient's needs above everything is actually a bold and significant move.

So what's the big deal? What does this mean for the rest of us? Well, the results are coming in and Marshall has had some terrific news. Would it surprise you if I said that our little hospital on the hill is nationally ranked for quality care and patient experience?

Marshall has recently received unbiased, third-party recognition. First, we received the highest possible 5-star rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for Overall Hospital Quality. And we recently learned that we've also earned the Outstanding Patient Experience Award for 2018 by Healthgrades, the leading online resource for comprehensive information about physicians and hospitals.

The ratings come from comparing all the hospitals in the nation according to HCAHPS scores, a survey CMS administers regarding patients' care experience. There are 10 standards that make up the patient experience including communication with doctors, responsiveness of hospital staff, pain management, cleanliness, quietness and whether the patient would recommend the hospital to others.

These two awards put Marshall Medical Center in the top 10% of hospitals in the country, and higher than all other hospitals in the Sacramento region. As a matter of fact, there are no Sacramento hospitals that rated 5 stars for quality and no other Sacramento hospital won the Outstanding Patient Experience Award. This is great news for Marshall, but what does it mean for you? Allow me to give you an example.

A few weeks ago, our daughter and her husband suddenly relocated to California and she went into labor after meeting with a Marshall physician only once. She and her husband had prepared carefully for the birth, developing a detailed birth plan. Even though they had not had the time to cultivate a relationship with Marshall providers, I was incredibly impressed that everyone on their birth team, from the physicians to the amazing nursing staff, treated them with great respect, honoring their plan and advocating for their wishes. Their excellent patient experience in Marshall's Birth Center truly exemplified Marshall's slogan, "It's about you". While it was a difficult and prolonged labor, their beautiful daughter was born. Then we had the occasion to experience Marshall's excellence in terms of critical quality care, because our daughter's situation took a turn for the worse.

When she began to hemorrhage, Dr. Cherry quickly and skillfully reacted to the serious condition. Our daughter was rushed to the operating room and all hands were on deck. The team that quickly assembled to assist included people from various specialties in the hospital. Had it been another time or in another hospital, the results may very well have been quite different. However, due to the expert care from Dr. Cherry and from all the departments of Marshall Medical Center that responded in the Birth Center OR, our daughter is alive, and she and her husband will be raising our beautiful granddaughter close to us.

As a mother, there are no words to express the depth of our gratitude. As a board member, I am proud to represent this incredible organization that provides 5-star, expert medical care in a compassionate and loving way right in the center and heart of our community.

Just think about it...Our local hospital puts patients' needs first and provides 5-star quality care. What more can we ask for?