

A HELPING HAND IN HEALTHCARE

Improving Patient Experience Through Hospital Volunteer Navigation

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INTRODUCTION

Mass General Brigham is a healthcare system committed to serving the community and improving patient care. Its mission focuses on providing high-quality care, advancing medical knowledge through research, and training the next generation of healthcare professionals.

The organization provides care for patients ranging from routine needs to complex medical conditions, with a focus on delivering coordinated and continuous care close to home. It is also deeply involved in medical research and discovery, helping to develop new treatments and improve healthcare practices.

In addition, the system also works closely with local communities through partnerships and programs that aim to improve access to care, especially for underserved populations.

A major observation during this study was that many individuals required help finding their way and getting information, highlighting the importance of effective communication in healthcare environments. This experience emphasized the value of volunteer roles in improving patient experience, reducing confusion, and supporting overall hospital operations.



INTERNSHIP PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Track daily interactions with patients, visitors, and staff
- ❖ Identify and categorize common questions to understand needs
- ❖ Assist individuals with directions and general support
- ❖ Support hospital operations through non-clinical tasks and event participation

RELATED LITERATURE

- Hotchkiss et al. (2009) found that hospital volunteers provide significant cost saving while also improving patient satisfaction. Their study also showed that larger volunteer programs are associated with better patient experiences and lower operational costs.
- Tamin et al. (2022) found that nurses view hospital volunteers as valuable contributors who support patient engagement and reduce workload. The study also suggests that expanding volunteer roles and improving training can strengthen volunteer programs and improve patient care.
- According to Stukas and Wilson (2022), the article found that people volunteer for a variety of reasons, including personal values, social connections, and skill development. It also emphasizes that understanding these motivations is important because it helps organizations improve volunteer satisfaction, retention, and overall effectiveness.

METHODS

- Collected data on frequently asked questions using tally sheets
- Recorded common challenges, including navigation and process understating
- Identified key areas requiring the most assistance
- Observed and documented communication between staff and patient/visitors

RESULTS

Most frequently asked questions:

- a) Where are the bathrooms?
- b) Where are the elevators (Davenport, Pingree, Phippen, Macomber)?
- c) How do I get to the lab?
- d) Where is the main entrance?
- e) Where can I find imaging and diagnostic services including Ultrasound, X-ray, radiology, nuclear medicine and mammography?

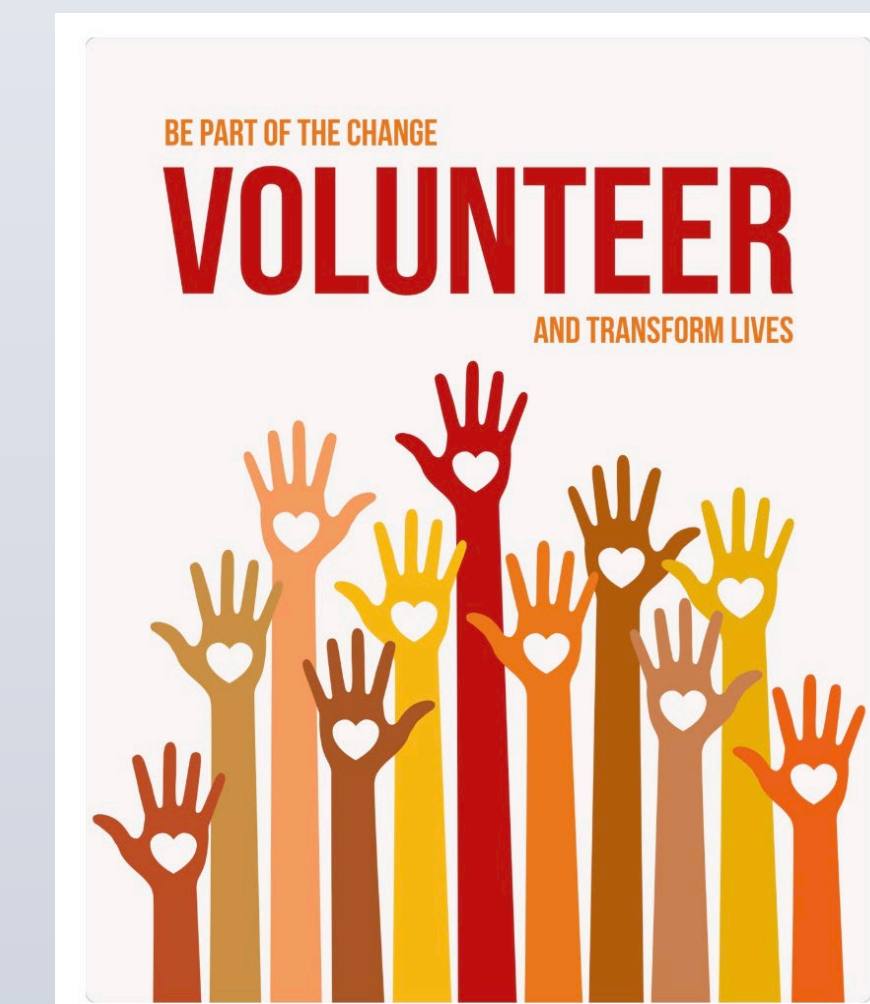
Least asked questions:

- a) Where is the cafeteria?
- b) Where is the Epstein building?
- c) How do I get to the emergency room?
- d) Where is the gift shop?

CONCLUSIONS

This internship highlighted the importance of effective communication and clear hospital navigation in supporting patient and visitor experiences. Observations showed that the most common needs involved directions, familiarity with hospital procedures, and locating key areas. High-demand locations and peak times further emphasized the need for accessible information and support.

Improving visual directions, navigation systems, and communication between staff and visitors can reduce confusion and improve overall efficiency. This experience also highlighted the important role volunteers play in supporting patients and enhancing the hospital environment.



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