



Barbara McLaughlin

Barbara's expertise is HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY with a focus on Healthcare. A lot of the information presented to patients is not remembered, understood or complied to. Barbara's life's passion is to help patients navigate and comprehend the healthcare world so they are not so frightened and upset by the mere process.

Barbara worked with Smart Source to create a series of products and services whose primary function is to educate and communicate to the patients. Visit our website at www.hand-holder.com and see how we meet this challenge. Then send us your comments and ideas so you too can help take care of everyone and feel good about your life every day!

Technology is **Not** for Everyone!!

Barbara K. McLaughlin
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While laptops, cellphones and tablets appear to be pervasive in our society, there are still many many people who do not own technology products as a mode of communication (or own, but do not use). What about them? Do we just leave them uninformed or confused?

Each morning I walk my dogs on a local beach at sunrise and usually meet up with 5 or 6 other dog walkers. It's sort of a little club and we chat comfortably as we walk along. One of the dog walkers is a "60 something" lady who is well educated and always well dressed. When I told her I'd text her a picture I took of her dog, she exclaimed "oh I don't do texting or email. Just call me if you want to tell me something!" So what do we do with these people? There appear to be lots of them! How do we give them specific medical instructions about their procedures or help them understand where they need to go? When you give complex instructions via phone, what are the chances the patient will A) understand them B) follow them C) remember them?



Based on past experiences the odds are not in our favor, yet missed appointments are extremely expensive to our healthcare system, not to mention the cost in health terms for our patients!

We can take this thinking a bit further as well-- We all think that immigrants need to assimilate and speak and write English to live in America. But what about someone's mother or grandson who's just been granted visa status but has not been here long enough to learn the language? If they suffer from a heart attack or cancer, or even a broken leg do we just gesticulate and hope they understand? Or speak in English and trust they are getting it because they are nodding their heads? Did you know that there is actually a Health and Human Services regulation that states "if 5% of your population or 1,000 people (whichever is less) speak a specific language, you MUST give

them critical medical information in their language of choice". (see www.lep.gov)

As concerned caregivers it is incumbent on us to reach out to our patients in the methodology they are most likely to be able to access, understand, and respond to. This is not rocket science but it is indeed common decency! Our mission is to provide care indiscriminately to those who most need it, regardless of their personal situation. This is what separates us from the oligarchies who randomly persecute their constituents, or from countries that do not have the resources to reach out appropriately and care for their most needy.

So how do we do this? The answer is simple: **Every way we can!**

Give the critical information to patients in the way they are most likely to use it. For Millennials, it is clearly mobile. Give them apps, programs, and messages on their mobile devices. Then follow it up with phone and text reminders so it does not get lost in their deluge of apps. Though a recent study of college students indicated that the two places they want their information in writing is their college textbooks and their medical information! (see <http://orangenyc.com/print-is-not-dead/>). For the rest of us, it is a mixture of methods: written, web, computer, mobile, text, phone, and video). For my dog walking friend it is written or phone ONLY that will reach her.

Smart Source Healthcare has had a mission for over a decade to help bridge the gap between healthcare providers and patients. This includes the healthcare illiterate (through the profuse usage of graphics and video), as well as all of the above. In particular our HandHolder™ product and service is designed to help patients who struggle to understand the American healthcare system in general as well as to help healthcare givers consistently reach out to patients in a way they can access and understand! Basically we help patients with: Where to go, How to get there, What to bring, How to prepare properly, How to be there on time, What documents they need, What information they need to have, What medications they currently take, What will happen to them when they arrive, What will happen to them when they get home, Where to park the car or what bus to take, and many other things. In other words- to communicate consistently, clearly, and completely so there are no surprises. This serves to not only help the whole process flow of healthcare, but to significantly reduce patient anxiety! And the best part is that once the patients make the appointment they do NOT have to do anything to get this information! WE DELIVER IT RIGHT TO THEIR MAILBOX and make it available many other ways as well.

If you are not reaching out to your patients using multiple methodologies, or in ways that are not automated and delivered consistently- no matter who's out sick or who's on vacation- you are not serving your patients well. You are not engaging them when they are the most worried or scared. You are not reducing their anxiety, Please consider looking hard at why SO many millions of patients appreciate what a HandHolder™ communication can do for them! Better yet call us today for a free demo. www.hand-holder.com.

Start the New Year off right and communicate effectively with your patients!

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