



## Always Events® Recognition Program

### Background

In 2009, the Picker Institute launched an initiative designed to significantly elevate the standard for the patient experience in healthcare organizations throughout the United States through the identification of “Always Events for the Optimal Patient Experience.” Always Events/Experiences refer to aspects of the patient experience that are so important to patients and families that healthcare providers should always get them right. Always Events are the provider actions/practices that create an Always Experience for patients/families. The **events** are measured by whether or not they occurred 100% of the time. The **experiences** are measured by assessment tools such as CAHPS or other validated feedback methods, which measure the extent to which the events are having the intended outcome of improving the patient’s experience of care.

The Always Events program reflects the insights of many patients, families, frontline providers, measurement experts, thought leaders, and stakeholder representatives who participated in the development process, as well as an esteemed National Steering Committee. Under their guidance, the Picker Institute determined that instead of developing a discrete list of Always Events for providers to implement, it would be more effective to maintain an “open architecture” that would allow providers to identify their own Always Events as long as they met specified criteria. The Picker Institute developed a Challenge Grant Program and more than forty organizations received financial support to implement one or more Always Events related to communication and care transitions. The list of funded organizations and a description of their projects is available on the Always Events website at <http://alwaysevents.pickerinstitute.org/>.

### Always Events and Experiences

Always Events are the provider actions/practices that create an Always Experience for patients/families. For example, an Always Experience could be that patients and family are treated with courtesy and respect as measured by CAHPS, and some of the Always Events contributing to that experience could include verifiable behaviors such as introductions, use of the patient’s preferred name, and knocking before entering the patient’s room.

## **Expansion of the Always Events Community through the Recognition Program**

The Always Events grantees have done much to advance patient-centered care through the eyes of the patient, but there are many more than forty organizations that have made great strides in elevating the optimal patient experience. The Recognition Program enables any organization that has implemented a program meeting the Always Events criteria to register their program and join the Always Events community.

### **Benefits of Recognition**

Programs that meet the criteria will become registered Always Events. All registered programs will be listed on the Always Events website. Registered programs will be able to use the Always Events brand in conjunction with their programs.

Promotional materials related to the Always Events program will highlight the recognized initiatives. In addition, organizations with registered Always Events may have the opportunity to promote their work in webinars and other forums convened as part of the Always Events program.

### **Application Process**

Organizations interested in applying for recognition should submit a letter to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement containing the information requested in the Always Events/Always Experiences Recognition Program Application. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement will review the application to ensure that it is complete and that the applicant has clearly documented how its program meets the required criteria. Organizations will be notified if the application is incomplete and given the opportunity to supplement their application. Applicants that meet the criteria will be notified that their program is being added to the list of registered programs and their resources will be added to the Always Events Toolbox.

The letter should be directed to [azambeaux@ihi.org](mailto:azambeaux@ihi.org) with a hard copy sent to:

Angela G. Zambeaux  
Project Manager  
Institute for Healthcare Improvement  
20 University Road, 7th Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02138 USA

### **Additional Information**

The Picker Institute and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement encourages organizations interested in applying for recognition to refer to the Always Events website (<http://alwaysevents.pickerinstitute.org/>) for more information about the program, including extensive resource materials from the grantee organizations, webinars, and video overviews.



## **Always Events®/Always Experiences® Recognition Program Application**

To apply for a program to be recognized as an Always Event/Experience, please submit a letter to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement containing the following information. (Please note: The letter must contain each of the sections described below to be considered. Organizations are encouraged to use the headings to mark the sections in their letter.)

1. **Identification of Proposed Always Event:** Please identify in 1-2 sentences the practice/program that is proposed to be recognized as an Always Event.
2. **Always Events/Experiences Criteria:** Please describe how the proposed Always Event meets the four Always Events criteria:
  - a. **Significant** – Patients have identified the event/experience as fundamental to their care.
  - b. **Evidence-based** – The event/experience is known to be related to the optimal care of and respect for the patient.
  - c. **Measurable** – The event/experience is specific enough that it is possible to accurately and reliably determine whether or not it occurred.
  - d. **Affordable** – The event/experience can be achieved by any organization without substantial renovations, capital expenditures, or the purchase of new equipment or technology.
3. **Foundational Elements:** Please describe the following elements of the program:
  - a. **Partnerships with Patients and Families:** Please indicate how the organization is partnering with patients and family members in the development and refinement of the program.
  - b. **Leadership:** Please describe how organizational leadership has supported this program, as well as patient-centered care in general.
  - c. **Staff Engagement:** Please describe how staff has been engaged in the program.
4. **Evaluation and Outcome:** Please describe the validated measures that are being used to assess the effectiveness of the program and the outcome of the evaluation to date.
5. **Evidence of Institutional Commitment:** The letter must be signed by an organizational official who affirms the following:
  - a. The proposed Always Event is consistently being executed within the applicant organization.
  - b. If the organization discontinues the program, the organization will notify the Always Events team and the program will be removed from the list of registered programs.
  - c. The organization agrees to make resources and tools related to the recognized Always Event publicly available at no charge through the online Always Events toolbox. At least one resource or tool must be included with the application letter.