



Ursula Soler

PATIENT NAVIGATOR
UNION COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTER, BPHC Member

Ursula Soler is a Patient Navigator with Union Community Health Center. Union Community Health Center is recognized as a Level 3 Patient Centered Medical Home and provides comprehensive, quality healthcare services in a patient-friendly environment. Union plays an integral role in many of BPHC's clinical projects and its governance.

“We have huddles every morning,” says Ursula Soler, Patient Navigator with the Health Home Program at Union Community Health Center. “It’s really a quick meeting, a good way to communicate with doctors. If doctors have any complicated patients, they’ll connect them to us.”

When Ms. Soler first reaches out to new patients, they can be wary - what she offers sounds almost too good to be true. Soon, however, the skepticism wears off.

“I start mentioning that I can help them navigate through benefits, social services, any medical specialties that might be giving them a hard time, anything that would help them lead a healthier lifestyle,” Ms. Soler says. “That’s when the light pops on and they say, ‘ok, this is what I need.’”

Health Home patients in particular are in need of this extra support. They suffer from chronic and complex medical conditions, usually more than one at the same time, not to mention the many challenges associated with poverty that make it difficult to stay healthy.

Once she learns about each patient’s unique situation, Ms. Soler works with them to set health goals, develop a care plan, coordinate healthcare and social services, and more. “There are so many little things that can improve someone’s health,” Ms. Soler has learned, “like just making a phone call or reminding them of their appointments.”

Ms. Soler is not only a valuable asset to her patients, but also to her care team. “Doctors see that with us, there is someone they can depend on,” she explains. “Doctors will call us into the consultation to explain something to the patient or help them follow through with a medication or a treatment.”

Ms. Soler’s ultimate goal is for patients to learn to manage their own health and to “graduate” from the Health Homes Program. The key to this, she has found, is trust. “It’s having someone there, who’s able to support them in dealing with a condition that they may not understand,” she says. “It helps them to be more self-sufficient.”

“For patients, it’s about having someone they can identify with - a familiar face - and knowing my door is always open.”

BPHC – Getting Care Coordination Right