Campaign Asks Physicians and Their Patients to Choose Wisely

Medical professionalism is the commitment physicians and health care professionals make to provide the safe, high-quality care that each patient deserves. It places the best interest of the patient before the system to maintain essential standards and competency.

It means providing good medicine. It means working toward accountability.

The concept of Choosing Wisely® aims to promote safe, high-quality care for patients regardless of the medical specialty. Created in 2012, Choosing Wisely is an initiative of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) focused on encouraging physicians and patients to be aware of medical tests and procedures that may be unnecessary and in some instances cause harm. Choosing Wisely promotes the crucial conversations between physicians and patients to make effective care choices.

Dr. Donald Skinner, a family medicine physician with the McFarland Clinic, sees the Choosing Wisely campaign as a way to adapt to the changing standard of care. He suggested on a recent interview, “As we work toward accountability, it is important that not only that we take great care of a patient but the care is delivered as efficiently as possible. All aspects of care testing diagnostics and treatments can and should be examined for their positive and negative impact on patient care.”

Recognizing the importance of physicians and patients working together, the nation’s leading specialty societies, along with Consumer Reports, have joined Choosing Wisely to help improve the quality and safety of health care. Each participating specialty society created a list of “Things Physicians and Patients Should Question” that provide specific, evidence-based recommendations physicians and patients should use to make effective and safe decisions on the most appropriate care based on their specific situation.

“When providers discuss the emerging concepts of care, a recurrent theme is lack of patient accountability and engagement for their own health,” Dr. Skinner added. Furthermore, he believes this initiative is an opportunity for physicians to have support in medical decisions explaining, “Choosing Wisely is an evidence-based tool health care providers can use to engage their patients regarding diagnostics and treatments that may not be necessary. The tone of discussion with the patient changes when you can explain the sometimes negative consequence of a test or procedure in terms of patient outcomes and safety and not just cost to the patient and/or the system.”

To further deploy Choosing Wisely across the nation, the ABIM Foundation awarded 21 recipients of Choosing Wisely grants to regional health collaboratives, medical associations, and specialty societies earlier this spring. The Iowa Healthcare Collaborative (IHC) was awarded the
2013-2014 grant to further advance the recommendations and concepts across Iowa. Over the next two years, information and resources for this initiative will be presented in various opportunities for Iowa physicians. Until then, check out www.ihconline.org for additional information.

The concept of *Choosing Wisely* focuses on medical professionalism by aiming to provide safe, reliable health care. Ultimately, the initiative drives accountability in a system embracing catalytic change.