

Population Health Forums

The Choosing Wisely® Campaign: Is This a Game Changer?

Daniel B. Wolfson, MHSA

*Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation*

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Have you ever received unnecessary care? This is how Mr. Wolfson, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the ABIM (American Board of Internal Medicine) Foundation initiated the discussion on “overuse” in healthcare. The ABIM Foundation is a not-for-profit organization focused on advancing medical professionalism and physician leadership to improve the health care.

Wolfson described overuse as unnecessary procedures where the benefits don’t exceed the risks. The problem of overuse and overtreatment is staggering in the US. Wolfson explained that over \$200 billion per year is wasted on overtreatment. The Choosing Wisely® campaign of the ABIM Foundation is an initiative that is aimed addressing this problem by helping physicians and patients engage in conversations about the overuse of tests and procedures, and support physician efforts

to help patients make smart and effective care choices. The major components of the campaign include: simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions, and stories. Wolfson shared his own personal stories to illustrate the classic examples of overtreatment.

An important component of the Choosing Wisely® Campaign is the document, *Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question*, a series of lists representing 25 specialty societies in the US. By recognizing the significance of patient and provider conversations, the tool is aimed at improving care and eliminating overtreatment. The comprehensive lists include scientific, evidence-based recommendations to help make decisions about the most appropriate care. Consumer Reports, a partner of Choosing Wisely®, has produced over 35 patient-friendly materials based on medical society recommendations that will

disseminate information about appropriate use of medical tests and procedures.

Wolfson explained that the success of the campaign is based on intrinsic motivation and a shift in cultural attitude. For example, the emphasis should be on “why”: “*Why* did you need that procedure or test?” rather than “Why didn’t you do that procedure or test?”

The campaign will continue to grow and flourish as it galvanizes multiple stakeholders (i.e. office practices, residency and medical training programs, health systems) to advance the campaign. ■

To learn more about the Choosing Wisely® Campaign visit:
<http://www.choosingwisely.org/>

To read Mr. Wolfson’s Medical Professionalism Blog visit: http://blog.abimfoundation.org/about_our_authors/