Findings from Wisconsin’s Ask Me 3™ Initiative

Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit
April 12, 2011
What is Ask Me 3™?

A simple patient education program with three essential questions

✓ What is my main problem?
✓ What do I need to do?
✓ Why is it important for me to do this?
What was the Ask Me 3 Initiative?

- Collaborative initiative with eight state organizations and six community health centers
- Target population was low-income adults
- Key goals
  - Increase patient engagement in own care
  - Improve patient-provider communication
Tested two approaches

- Low intensity: brochures, posters & key tags; short DVD demonstrating questions; orientation session for all staff
- High intensity: all of the above plus effective communication training for clinical staff and customer service reps talking individually with patients
Comprehensive evaluation

- Pre- and post-patient surveys—based on Patient Activation Measure™ and items adapted from Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems® patient survey
- Post-program provider survey—modified questions from Patient Activation Measure
- Feedback survey from health center staff
Evaluation Tools

- **Patient Activation Measure™** assesses patients’ knowledge, skill and confidence in managing their health.
- **Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems®** measures patient satisfaction with their visit with the health care provider.
- Provider survey assessed perceptions of their patients’ engagement in their own care.
- Staff survey sought suggestions of improvements in the Ask Me 3 pilot.
What did Wisconsin learn?

- **Motivating Behavior Changes**
  - Ask Me 3, by itself, was not sufficient to encourage patients to ask their provider questions

- **Patient Perceptions**
  - Patients at high intensity sites viewed their visit with provider less positively than respondents prior to Ask Me 3
What was learned (cont.)

- **Patient Engagement**
  - Patients at high intensity sites had higher activation scores following Ask Me 3

- **Provider Perceptions**
  - Believed that their patients were willing to share their concerns and wanted to know about proposed treatments
  - Reported that patients seldom engaged in behaviors that would help them manage their health
What was learned (cont.)

- **Staff Awareness about Communication Issues**
  - Pilot increased staff awareness about the importance of clear communication
  - Ask Me 3 was a good tool to help patients

- **Motivating Behavior Changes**
  - All materials well received; key tags were popular
  - DVD with demo of patient asking questions was effective
How can the findings inform practice?

- Clear communication is a shared responsibility
- Providers may benefit from training on evidence-based communication strategies:
  - Using plain language
  - Framing instructions in the form of the three questions
  - Using “teach back”
Informing practice (cont.)

- Low income population reluctant to question providers; intervention needs to be more intensive than brochures and posters
- Raising awareness about communication challenges may set the stage for other interventions
Questions & Comments
Contacts

- Linda McCart—608.266.9296
  - Linda.McCart@wi.gov
- Cindy Schlough—608.826.6839
  - cschlough@wchq.org
- Susan Cochran—608.266.7238
  - Susan.Cochran@wi.gov
Resources

- Ask Me 3 Pilot reports
  - [http://wchq.org/about/askme3.php](http://wchq.org/about/askme3.php)

- Health Literacy Precautions Toolkit
  - [http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy/](http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy/)

- Health Literacy Wisconsin
  - [http://www.healthliteracywisconsin.org/](http://www.healthliteracywisconsin.org/)