

Findings from Wisconsin's Ask Me 3™ Initiative

Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit
April 12, 2011



A participant in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *Aligning Forces for Quality* initiative to improve health and health care in Wisconsin.



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

Pilot (cont.)

- 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



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Resources

- Ask Me 3 Pilot reports
 - <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aboutdhs/OPIB/index.htm>
 - <http://wchq.org/about/askme3.php>
- Health Literacy Precautions Toolkit
 - <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/literacy/>
- Health Literacy Wisconsin
 - <http://www.healthliteracywisconsin.org/>